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THE LAST DAYS
OF
MARY STUART.

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE LAST DAYS OF MARY STUART.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun was sinking beneath the horizon at the close of a sultry day in the latter end of June, and its parting beams shed a rich tint on the varied foliage which, just then in the height of its luxuriance, gave grace and beauty to a small Scottish hamlet, that, deprived of such softening shade, had only been noticed for the wild and rugged scenery which so eminently characterised many parts of Scotland,

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at the period in which the events recorded in the following pages took place.

The few straggling cottages, peeping from among the trees, bore no affinity, in point of appearance, to the lovely landscape around, being, for the most part, indicative of that abject state to which the peasantry were doomed by the heartless oppression of a tyrannical noblesse, unrestrained by laws partially administered, during a season peculiarly marked by violence on the part of the nobility, and by weakness and error on that of the ruling powers.

One small dwelling seemed in some degree exempt from the rude barbarity which reigned around; and while the little plot of ground belonging to the other cottages produced only the thorn and the thistle, this was gay with rose and eglantine, which, trained against the whitened wall, shed their delicious perfume around.

At the door of the cabin stood an old woman, whose feeble spirit seemed ready to break from its earthly tabernacle; her attention was at this moment engrossed by a boy, whose age might be about three years, and who, after the fashion of the young choristers of the air, was opening his little mouth to receive the portion of food which the old woman doled out to her nursling from a wooden bowl.

More perfect specimens of age and infancy could not be found; the worn, and anxious countenance of the old woman forming a fine contrast with the beaming eye and cherubic head, rich with its clustering curls, of that fair child. As the old woman, after satisfying the appetite of her young charge, was turning again to the cottage, the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and a minute after a horseman, covered with dust, reined up his exhausted steed, and, after cautiously glancing his eye

round to ascertain that all was safe, lighted down from the jaded beast, which had evidently been urged to a speed beyond its noble nature, and slackening the girths of the ponderous saddle, sought in some degree to relieve the beautiful animal, which, sensible of its master's efforts to give it comfort, caressed him with its head, testifying by its dumb eloquence gratitude and affection.

Approaching the old woman, the Knight, for such his belt and spurs betokened him, besought her for a draught of water.

“ If the poor beast ye have well nigh ridden to death could speak,” she answered, “ would it not cry out for some too? Shame thus to abuse a dumb creature, and all, I warrant, to suit some fool's whim of your own! but yonder is the well, and if ye list to draw him a bucket full, do; my old limbs are too feeble to save ye the labour.”

“ Gramercy, good mother,” the stranger

answered, "far be it from me to exact such service from one like you."

The Knight caught up the bucket, and soon returned with the welcome draught.

"So, my poor fellow," he continued, patting the noble beast, "thou hast done well this weary day. Yet, beshrew me! we have still many a mile to go before we stretch our limbs to rest."

Then, turning to the old woman, he asked, how many miles it was to Dunbar.

"To Dunbar!" she repeated in a tone of surprise, "full sixty Scottish miles; and with this poor, weary beast you will hardly get over them this night."

"We must try," he answered gloomily; "Bayard has helped me, ere now, at a pinch; and he will not fail his master, to-day. Yet I would fain spare his generous nature; but this journey past, he shall have rest enough; it will be long before I take another on his back."

“ Yet wherefore not tarry to-night, and give him time to recover ?”

“ Because, good mother, life or death hangs on my speed ; and a night’s, even an hour’s delay, might render all the toil I have this day encountered of no avail.”

“ Are you then fleeing from an enemy ?” the old woman asked, fastening on him her keen, grey eye, as if she would read his thoughts.

The Knight started at the question, or rather at the look and tone which accompanied it ; and his hand grasped the hilt of his sword, while his eye glanced round as if in search of some more legitimate object of dread than a decrepid woman. She smiled as she marked the effect of her question.

“ Fear not,” she said, “ there is nobody here can harm you ; the few stout arms that might have stayed even one like you are away to the wars, and all left in their room are aged crones, like me, and feeble infancy.”

“ And you doubtless wish to hear news of your neighbours ?”

The old woman shook her head.

“ I am a stranger and an outcast among them,” she replied ; “ nor is there one who gives a kind word to the English witch, for so they term me in their tongue.”

“ You are then a native of England. I guessed, by your speech, Scotland was not the place of your birth. Why not return to your own people, and leave the churls who are thus wanting in kindness to the stranger.”

“ The spoiler has been there,” she answered bitterly, “ he robbed me of my treasure, and, as I left my desolate hearth, I swore never again to cross a threshold that could only remind me of what I once possessed—but ’tis idle prating,” she muttered, turning towards the cottage ; “ this one may have been linked with the false thief that rendered my old age accursed.”

“ Was it then a Scot who did you foul wrong? Bethink you dame, ’twas but the chance of war. Many a Scottish wife can tell a tale of house and land left desolate when the fausse Southern harried them.”

“ I spoke not of war,” the old woman said, “ had the villain entered the widow’s peaceful dwelling sword in hand, and seized upon her little all, he would perchance have been held in abhorrence for the deed of violence; but he came in the guise of friendliness and compassion—he stole into our hearts; and when he found we trusted to his well told tale, the heartless wretch destroyed the life of my only child, whom he had sworn before the altar to protect and love. But they are gone; a fearful death has avenged his falsehood, and an early grave has closed over her who once gladdened her mother’s days!”

“ This, then, is your daughter’s child?” the stranger said, laying his hand on the boy’s

head. "He is a noble fellow, and will one day be a soldier ; that I read in his frank and bold bearing. My journey is one of danger, and his years are too tender, else would I ask him for my little page. How say you, dame ; would you trust the word of a belted knight, and give me the boy?"

"He shall never be a soldier," said the old woman hastily, "while I live Harry must be with me ; and when I am dead he shall follow his brave uncle on the broad sea, and learn to be a sailor."

"Nay, I had thought myself of quitting the lance and stirrup, for the freer life of a sailor," the knight answered. "Say then, if I come again, you will let the boy go with me ; his bold look pleases me. Credit me, he shall be well nurtured, and the rather, that his bearing recalls one, to whom in former days I did some wrong."

At this moment a column of dust was seen

rising in the distance, in the direction whence the knight had made his appearance. He cast a startled look towards it; then tightening the girths of his saddle, sprang into it, and waving his hand to the old woman, vanished like a meteor, leaving wonder and dread behind him.

So rapid had been the horseman's flight, that the old woman stood for a moment in complete bewilderment, more than half inclined to believe, in accordance with the superstitious spirit of the times, that what she had seen could not be mortal man, but rather some evil spirit, allowed at times to escape from its prison house, and wander through the earth seeking whom he might beguile. But it was to other sources the more enlightened mind would have traced his instantaneous disappearance, attributing it to the efforts of a generous animal, which seemed capable of entering into its master's sense of danger, and exerting a speed that did indeed appear supernatural, to place that mas-

ter beyond the fierce grasp of the avenger. Well might the stranger declare life or death hung on that journey; had his noble horse faltered as it bore him from those thirsting for his blood, his parting shrift had been short; but fate had decreed it otherwise, and he was left for a season to play a part on the busy stage of the world, which had already rung with his name and daring crimes.

The old woman gazed a brief space after the horseman, then started round with a look of horror as the thought crossed her mind, that the mysterious being, who had so strangely passed, might have robbed her of the boy whose possession he had seemed so earnestly to covet; but her fears were relieved as she beheld the child riding on the back of a large dog, his constant playfellow, and with a slender willow wand, firmly grasped in his little hand endeavouring, as far as his feeble strength would permit, to mimic the martial bearing of

the armed knight. A smile of mingled pride and affection lighted the aged woman's sunken eye, as she beheld that lovely picture of innocence and joy, and stretching her trembling arms towards the child of her love, the boy bounded from his favorite's back, and twining his arms round his grandmother's neck nestled in her bosom.

“ God help thee, poor imp !” she said “ the friend of the widow and the orphan watch over thee ! thy earthly friends are few, and thy old granny's arm grows feebler day by day ; when its strength is quite gone, who shall win for thee food and raiment ?”

The history of that aged woman and her tender nursling was a sad one ; she was the widow of one descended from a noble house, and the first part of her life had been passed in splendour ; but one by one her earthly ties were severed ; the sword, and the axe, that fearful instrument when wielded under a ty-

rant's command, had swept them all away, and she found herself forlorn and desolate, with an only child—a daughter; and to support and rear this delicate flower the widow toiled hard, for her sake forgetting to mourn for days gone by. And there came a ray of comfort amid this gloom of poverty and privation; the widow became acquainted with one of those enlightened men by whose powerful eloquence the errors of the church of Rome had been exposed; and listening to his message of truth and purity she learned to abhor the mummary exercised by a corrupt priesthood to support a religion based upon fraud and blasphemy.

Thus, to her, there arose light out of darkness, and for some years she lived contented with her peaceful, though lowly lot; but then came the hour of trial. A stranger of noble mien and winning grace sought her lonely cot, and under the guise of compassion and kindly feeling stole into the hearts of the widow and

her young daughter. Bereaved of those who should have been their comfort and defence, who can marvel if they readily yielded to the fascination wrought by one who well knew how to assume the character best adapted to supply the losses they had sustained. He sought the hand of the beautiful Ellen, and, at length, under the plea that secrecy was necessary to screen him from the malice of angry friends, he brought her to consent that their nuptials should be celebrated in private. The ceremony was performed in the presence of the fond mother, who, in the certainty that her child had secured a powerful protector, had nothing left to wish for on earth. But a short time sufficed to awaken her from this blissful dream.

The better to effect his purpose, the fiend had suffered them to suppose he was of the same persuasion as themselves. True, he had never openly avowed his adherence to the tenets of the reformers, but the victims of his

heartless villany believed, in the simplicity of their nature, that had it not been so he would have shunned the altar at which they knelt; and not, as was frequently the case, sought to offer his prayers with them. But a more splendid alliance presented itself, and then he confessed his faith, pleading as an excuse for the cruel desertion he meditated, a scruple of conscience for having thus wedded with a heretic. Yet one reflection consoled him, their marriage was not binding; and the wrong done to one who followed the doctrine of Geneva, was, in those days of angry passion, a circumstance too trivial to be dwelt upon.

Comforted by the absolution granted by his spiritual director, he set out for Scotland, leaving the stricken deer to weep in solitude the wound that she had received. Life became a burden too grievous to be borne; its waters, till this moment, had flowed sparkling into her cup, and she had drained the tide of love and

joy, that in cruel mockery was for an instant held to her lip. But now the pure current was troubled, and she turned from the bitter draught, which was all that she might henceforth hope to taste.

She lived to bless her infant boy, and then gently sank to that rest the wicked have no power to trouble. With her last breath she besought her mother to bear her son to his father, fondly believing the sight of him might work on the heart of a parent, and induce him to extend that protection to his helpless child, he had denied to her who gave it birth. In accordance with her wishes, the old woman travelled to Scotland, braving the fatigue and danger of a long journey with a tender babe. But trouble and disappointment again overtook her : shortly after her arrival in Scotland a violent death cut short the days of the author of her misfortunes ; and thus she was left, at an advanced age, to struggle with all the miseries

attendant on poverty, and burdened with the care of a helpless infant.

In this forlorn situation her first intention was to return to her native country ; but the perils she had encountered made her shrink from again exposing her life ; since who would care for the sweet orphan, should she be taken from him. Each year that added strength and beauty to her little nursling, stole some of the vigor from her aged frame, and at the very moment the stranger made the extraordinary request, that she would yield up the charge of her grandson to him, the old woman's utmost endeavours could only win a scanty portion of meal, which for some time had been their sole nourishment.

She mused, as she caressed the noble boy, on the strange apparition. Was it indeed a living man that stood before her ? one who in future time might prove the friend and protector of her child ; or was it a spirit of darkness that

waited but her assent to his tempting offer, to snatch the child to the region of darkness for ever? His dark and fiery eye, together with the deep furrows imprinted on his handsome brow, spoke of a mind agitated by violent passions; and the old woman was almost induced to believe that one of those malignant demons, which were supposed to possess the power of wandering through the earth, during some portion of the time of torment, just retribution of crimes committed while in the flesh, had been permitted to approach her. The thought made her clasp the boy more fondly to her bosom, as if to assure him of protection from the assaults of the arch fiend, should he again renew his temptation.

But it was from an earthly friend, she would guard him; one whose wild career had been sullied by crimes of the blackest hue, and who was, even now, fleeing from the punishment due to his open violation of the laws of

God and man. Yet it was strange how, even in that hour of peril, he had coveted the possession of that fair boy. Those who knew the man might justly ask, was it for good or evil he sought it? Capable of noble acts of generosity perchance, he wished to repair the wrongs done to him, whose lineaments he traced in those of the boy, by lavishing on him riches and preferments; — or, on the other hand, might he not seek to sweep from his future path one who so powerfully called to mind a dark act, which, standing out from among the many his life had witnessed, clung to his memory with a tenacity he would fain have shaken off.

But whatever the motive which prompted so singular a desire, it was, for the present, lost in the approach of danger; and even the little moment which had been spent in urging his request had well nigh cost the horseman his life; since had those by whom he was so hotly pursued continued to track his path, with the

same precision they had at first exercised, he would on the spot have fallen their victim. But just as the prize was within their grasp, some unaccountable impulse induced the leader of the party to quit the direct road, and, by turning off to the left, soon lost every trace of the object of their pursuit ; who gaining the nearest seaport, found a vessel ready to sail ; in which he embarked, and was borne far from the scene of his villany.

CHAPTER II.

TIME had fled on with its usual swiftness ; the green leaf of summer had given place to the seared and faded bough of autumn, and the mellow tints, which linger round its soft shadowy days, had one by one departed, and were succeeded by the snow clad landscape, with the chill and gloom of winter. Again and again these changes had passed as a fitful dream, when little Harry beheld his aged relative fast sinking to her long repose. Death he

had never witnessed ; when, therefore, his grandmother told him she was about to die, he was unable to comprehend the full extent of the trial that awaited him ; but a vague idea of some unknown trouble and danger caused him to cling yet more fondly to the only being he had been allowed to love. The full time was, however, come when he must resign her ; and, stretched on a bed of straw, the aged woman was gazing, for the last time, on the much loved offspring of that child she was about to rejoin. The boy sat by her side, seeking in vain to induce her to swallow the contents of a small wooden cup he held from time to time to her lips.

“ It will do you good, Granny dear,” he said, in answer to a mute gesture of rejection, “ you know uncle Ben says wine will make you live even if you were dead ; and how far he went to get this ! he says every drop cost a silver shilling ; so do drink it, for if it cost so much, it must be good.”

“ Presently, my child, perhaps I may take some ; but not now, put down the cup, Harry, and listen to me. I may not live till your uncle comes back, but you are old enough to think sometimes of the words I speak. One promise I would have from you, my brave boy ; and, as you value the old woman’s blessing, who has watched over you with a mother’s care, and your own happiness hereafter, promise you will strive to remember those holy precepts I sought to impress on your youthful mind. I am about to leave you, alone and unprotected, in a world of danger, which resembles the smooth ocean in outward shew, but quicksands lurk beneath, ready, at every moment, to betray your erring feet.”

The old woman passed her trembling hand beneath the rude wooden bolster which supported her head, and taking thence a small black volume, whose worn appearance bore

ample testimony to the constant use it had been subject to, thus continued.

“Silver and gold I have none, but this precious book encloses treasures of great price ; take it then, my son ; search it diligently, and daily, that when the hour comes, when you must be as I am now, you may know your grandmother pointed you the way to an inheritance that passes not away.”

Exhausted by her efforts, the aged woman sank back and presently fell into a heavy slumber ; long and profound was that sleep, the sure harbinger of a more undisturbed rest ; and the dying saint was not aware that another anxious watcher was added to the youthful guardian she had beheld beside her. This was a man of middle age, whose weather beaten face, and sailor’s dress, proclaimed him a British seaman ; a title we are apt to consider but another word for honesty, bravery, kind-

heartedness, and all the virtues that may render man estimable ; and truly, amid the heartless selfishness and contemptible pride, so conspicuous in the character of the worldling, there is something refreshing in the childlike simplicity and noble generosity of a true son of the ocean.

And in no one point did honest Ben Franklin fall short of the character of a genuine British tar. With the courage of the lion, he possessed the guileless simplicity of the dove ; and while incapable of injuring any, he believed all were prompted by the same kindly feelings that glowed in his own honest breast ; and thus, totally unguarded, he was the constant prey of the designing and the frolicksome, who in turn assailed him ; the one to be possessed of his prize money, and the other to inveigle him into situations in which his unsophisticated nature afforded rich food for mirth. He was brother to the old woman, who had been to him as a mother in the days of his childhood ; but the

reverse of fortune, which forced her to seek shelter in a lowly cot, had also obliged her to consent to poor Ben's becoming a cabin boy ; and to her other sources of regret, in aftertimes, was that of knowing his lot was cast among those, who would either hate him for still adhering to catholicity, or, giving themselves no trouble about the matter, allow him to continue unmolested in the exercise of a mode of worship, she had learned to regard as idolatrous.

During the few brief visits Ben had paid his sister, she had laboured earnestly to win him from the errors of his church ; but in vain. Open to conviction on every other subject, and regarding his sister with a veneration, which exalted her above every earthly being, he yet heard her on the subject of religion not merely with indifference, but with a degree of anger, which took its rise from the mortification he felt that one, regarded in every other point as perfect, should have been led to listen to what

he considered the impious tenets of a daring heretic, who, by his blasphemous doctrines had ventured to desecrate all most holy in the church. Some years had passed since they had met ; but a few weeks being allowed the honest sailor from the duties of his service, he hastened down to find again this still fondly-loved relative. He found her sinking beneath the pressure of age and poverty ; and just arrived in time to comfort her departing spirit, by promising to supply her place in the care of little Harry Knox.

At the moment we have introduced him, Ben Franklin entered the lowly cabin, bending beneath the weight of a large basket, the contents of which had been obtained at the expense of vast fatigue. Perceiving that the object of his solicitude slept, the sailor placed his ponderous load cautiously on the ground, then drawing the window curtain so as to exclude a sunbeam, which played on the face of the

sleepers, as if seeking to rekindle the warmth of life in that marble cheek and sunken eye, he crept with the caution of a fond mother, fearful of disturbing her infant's slumber, and seated himself beside the lowly couch.

At length the old woman once more opened her eyes, and gazed around with the startled, bewildered look, which accompanies the sudden waking of those, whose mortal life is closing, when the spirit, hovering between this world and the next, is unable for a moment to determine, whether it is still a prisoner in its tenement of clay, or is admitted into that unknown region where all is new, and eagerly seeks around for those dear, familiar faces, which it had fondly dreamed would be the first to welcome it to the land of bliss.

As Ben beheld the anxious eye wandering feebly in search of something, which apparently did not meet its gaze, he felt the delightful conviction, that the moment had arrived when

the awakened soul, repenting its past heresy, was about to cast off the trammels in which it had been bound by an heretical creed, and, by confession and recantation, seek for re-admittance into the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Animated by this delightful assurance, he took from his bosom a small ivory crucifix, and, devoutly kissing the little image, held it before the dying woman, whispering, at the same time, that Father Ambrose was waiting not far off, and would be with her in a moment. But this well meant proffer did not meet with the reception he had looked for. With more energy than could have been expected in one so feeble, the dying woman repulsed the hand that held towards her the symbol of an idolatrous worship, saying.

“I carry them in my heart, and need not a senseless image to remind me of my Redeemer.”

“Avast, sister!” the honest sailor said

mortified and astonished at the destruction of his hopes, "I thought, d'ye see, that being about to set sail on the ocean of eternity, it would not be amiss for the priest to throw in a little ballast; just by way of keeping the vessel steady; but mayhap there's one of your own people you would like to comfort you; if so, tell me, and he shall be here in the twinkling of an eye, though I am obliged to bring him through the water on my back."

"It needs not," the old woman replied, "He that is with me is greater than earthly beings; and to His guidance I can safely trust, even in the dark and gloomy valley of death."

Honest Ben listened in silence to a language perfectly new to him, nor could he for one moment understand, how any one durst die without the absolution, he had been taught to consider essential to a soul's reception, even into purgatory. Affection for his sister forbade him to yield the point without further effort;

and another motive equally powerful, was found in the alarm occasioned by divers conversations, held with Father Ambrose, respecting the awful condition of a soul about to be condemned to everlasting darkness, a doom, which even the bribe of all the prize money Ben might hereafter touch, and which was to be laid out, at the priest's discretion, in Masses for the tortured spirit, could prevail on the inexorable denunciator to reverse. Horror at the recollection of this awful condemnation therefore concurred, with fraternal affection, in urging poor Ben again to return to the charge ; as he believed, in the simplicity of his heart, that, could the invalid be prevailed on, but for one moment, to receive a visit from Father Ambrose, all further anxiety would be spared on her account ; and since she must die, he should at least have the satisfaction of knowing all was right with her soul, which might reasonably be expected to escape with a few

years of purgatory, a term he promised himself the satisfaction of abridging by liberal gifts to the holy Roman see. Bending over her, he besought the dying woman, with all the persuasive eloquence he was master of, not to resist the power of the church, setting before her the dreadful consequences of departing under the malediction of the priest.

Suddenly raising herself with a power that seemed supernatural, she answered :—

“ Time was, when like you, Ben, I too was fettered by the superstitions of a papist, and God knows the struggle it cost me to free myself from the chain—to free myself did I say? that had indeed been impossible, since what human strength is equal to burst the iron bonds, in which the priests of Rome have bound their victims; what human mind, unaided by a higher power, could bear up under their bitter curse, or resist the more dangerous poison of their persuasive eloquence. What mortal is

there but must feel the overpowering influence of that splendour and seemingly awful solemnity, with which they invest their idolatrous rites. All this I, a weak woman, was permitted to rise above, thanks be to Him who gave me the victory ; and in this hour, when I go to prove the reality of those truths, I have been allowed to embrace, and the worthless vanity of those beggarly elements, to which I once clung, may the Redeemer, who I trust is about to receive the soul he died for, hear the prayer which I offer up for you, my brother, still in the bonds of idolatry ; and may He in mercy open the eyes of your understanding, that you may see the awful precipice on which you stand ; and before it be too late, may you flee for safety to the rock of ages, that true rock on which His church is built, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail."

She sunk back in utter exhaustion, but he

eye, still raised to heaven, and the fervent expression of her pallid brow, plainly bespoke a spirit rising above the weakness of that tenement of clay, still its prison, and wrestling in earnest prayer in behalf of those to whom her earthly affections yet clung.

Believing his grandmother was about to faint, the boy raised the cup of wine to her lip with a trembling hand. She received the welcome draught eagerly, then a faint smile played over her hollow cheek, as she laid her withered hand on the curly head of her darling.

“May God bless thee, my boy,” she said, “and may he continue you in the faith, I have sought to instil into your young mind. Ben,” she continued, looking earnestly at her brother, while a portion of her failing energy for a moment ebbed back to her eye, “as you value the blessing of a dying sister, seek not to lead this lamb from the fold into which, I hope, he is

adopted; remember my last request, and may this blessed child, I leave to your care, prove the means of leading you aright!"

A convulsive motion stopped her further utterance; one short struggle, and she lay peaceful in death. A cry of horror burst from the boy, as he marked the fearful change pass across the features of his grandmother, and hiding his eyes, as if to shut out a sight to him so appalling, he dashed himself on the ground, with all the despair of first and passionate grief.

The sailor sought not to disturb this natural effusion of feeling; indeed his mind was, at the moment, painfully divided between sorrow for his departed sister, and the difficulty of finding any one likely to lend assistance in the necessary arrangements, previous to the interment. The effort must however be made, and he entered the nearest cottage to pray, that the good woman who inhabited it, would perform the needful offices for the departed; but he met

only denial ; his sister had died under the ban of the church, and woe to the Catholic, who should presume to lay a finger on the corpse unhallowed by the consecrated oil. The sailor met with no better success in one or two others.

“ She was aye an uncanny chield,” one of the gossips observed, “ an’ doubtless it wad be an unco’ risk for ony christian to meddle wi her, sin the deil had, nae doubt—provided a muckle company to watch abune the corse, lest it should be rescued fra’ his claws.”

With many such consolatory speeches was honest Ben greeted, until almost driven to despair, he was about to retrace his steps, when “ a new made widow,” who had found means to admire, through her tears, the honest sailor’s frank look and merry eye, was induced, for the sake of christian charity, to take upon herself the abhorred office of preparing a heretic corpse for its unhallowed sepulchre ; and following Ben to the cottage, gladdened his heart by the

zeal, with which she made every arrangement. The first difficulty overcome, it now remained to seek a minister of the gospel, who would consign the inanimate clay to its kindred dust. This did not prove so difficult an undertaking as the first; for though the inhabitants of the little hamlet, in which he was placed for a time, still adhered to the ancient faith, a few miles only separated it from one, equally devoted to the reformed religion. Ben Franklin, who had been taught to consider the teachers of this impious heresy as a species of monster, beheld, with some surprise, the mild and benevolent countenance of the venerable man to whom he was directed. A degree of awe, for which he could not account, stole over the rough sailor, as he silently rendered the homage which is paid, even for a time, by the most depraved, to that sacred dignity of demeanour, with which the humble and devoted follower of his heavenly master is invested.

The minister listened with patient attention to the sailor's request, couched in terms somewhat difficult to be understood.

"Your sister, my friend," he said, when the speaker had finished, "was brought to a knowledge of the truth, as it is set before us in the written word of God ; and has the same mercy been vouchsafed to you?"

Ben shook his head.

"I am still a child of Holy Mother Church," he replied, "and I hope no offence, if I say, no heretic shall wreck the faith of Ben Franklin."

The worthy pastor saw this was not the moment to attempt a refutation of that faith, so boldly avowed ; he therefore breathed a silent prayer, that the honest and simple minded being beside him, might be another brand plucked from the burning ; and satisfied with his promise, that he would not fail to be on the spot indicated, the following morning, the un-

conscious object of his solicitude returned to comfort his still mourning charge.

True to his appointment, the minister was found at his post, and the simple and beautiful service, which hallows the resting place of the dead, being finished, Ben drew from his pocket a well worn leathern pouch, and taking thence a small silver coin, proffered it to the minister, but the latter declined it, saying. "Thanks worthy friend, but I take not money for doing my duty to such as you ; keep the offering, you may hereafter need it."

"But if not for yourself," Ben replied, still pressing upon him the little coin, in blunt sincerity, and with no small degree of embarrassment, "take it for the use of my poor sister's soul."

"Thy sister's soul is above all that we can offer for it ; nor can all the atonements now made, change one tittle of its destiny. Let it be thy comfort, friend, that in the kingdom of

her Redeemer, she is now enjoying happiness that passes our understanding."

The looks of the sailor expressed not satisfaction.

"I hope, sir," he said, "that in time she may be happy, but she died in error, and the purgatory of such, holy father Ambrose says, must be sharp; and he even doubts that being able to save her from everlasting pain. Yet, he says, a few dead Masses may do good."

"Believe him not; his prayers and idolatrous sacrifices are alike unavailing; as the tree falls so it must lie."

"Till somebody comes with ropes, and drags it away," Ben quickly rejoined. "Now, your honor, the masses, which Father Ambrose shall say for my sister's soul, are the ropes which shall drag it out of purgatory."

The minister turned towards Harry Knox, probably to conceal the smile, which involun-

tarily stole over his face, at Ben's shrewd application of his suggestion.

"And are you, too, a papist?" he asked.

"My grandmother was a Protestant," the boy answered, "and she told me I must be one too."

"God preserve you in the way, my son! you will indeed need His all powerful aid, to keep you therein, if exposed, at your tender age, to the wily priests of Rome; but if you will come home with me, I will teach you, as your grandmother taught you."

Here Ben broke in upon the conversation.

"Avast, your honor! the boy is all that remains to me of my flesh and blood; and sure your honor would not entice him from me; he is to set sail with me, and while Ben Franklin has a stiver, he shall never want it; for his religion, I leave that, as well as my own, to the priest, who must know a deal more about our souls than we do, seeing as how they keep a

debtor and creditor account between us and heaven, and have a care we don't over charge the log book."

"Yet I would preserve the lamb," the minister rejoined, "in the right fold; he is young, and must be exposed to much danger, both of body and soul, in the course of life to which you destine him; leave him then with me, my friend; he will be a heavy burden upon you; I will relieve you from it; with me he shall be carefully kept; and such an education bestowed upon him, as shall enable him to fill my place, when it shall please God to call me home. He shall replace in my home and heart, the son I have lost."

The sailor again shook his head. "You will teach the boy to hate his old uncle, because he is not one of your own folk; no, no, Harry Knox must be an honest man, as far as I can make him one; no offence to your honor, but, I hold it better he should go

aft with a light heart, and a clear conscience, than stay at home to curse those, who mayhap have never done or wished him ill. And as for eddycation, why, d'ye see, I hold that same very cheap 'cause why? I never knew good come of it, my poor sister, that's dead and gone, she had a power of book larning, and that's the reason, Father Ambrose says, why she took such queer fancies about religion. So thank you for Harry ; all the larning he will have, must be to box the compass, and heave the lead. Howsomever, we are obliged to your honor, and if ever you want a friend to stand by you, why, Ben Franklin's the man, that won't shrink."

"Thanks, honest friend, for your kindly offer ; and better aid, or a more trusty arm, I would never seek, did I deem security might be found in one of flesh ; I will return your good will by sincere prayer, which shall be constantly offered up to the throne of grace,

that you may be turned from error, and that this dear child may be preserved in the right path."

He shook the boy affectionately by the hand, then slowly, and with reluctance, quitted one whose youth and prepossessing countenance had strongly interested him in his favour.

CHAPTER III.

TAKING the privilege, allowed to story tellers in general, we shall not attempt minutely to fill up the years, which intervened between Harry Knox's childhood, and the period, when we shall again present him to the reader; it will be sufficient to state, that he became enthusiastically attached to the life of a sailor, and that he had firmly resisted every offer of advancement, which his gallant conduct had, on more than one occasion, procured for him, lest

he might thereby be separated from a relative, to whom he was united both by the ties of gratitude and affection.

A signal service, which it was the young sailor's good fortune to render Sir John Norris, was repaid in the manner, which was found most agreeable to his feelings; and honest Ben, owner of a small trading vessel, trod the deck with all the pride of a youthful monarch, in the "first morning of his reign." Nothing seemed wanting to his perfect contentment, for with his gift, Sir John Norris had recommended the old veteran so strongly to the notice of Queen Elizabeth, that she frequently employed him in the secret and important missions, so continually passing between the courts of England and Scotland.

It is well known, that the constant policy of Elizabeth was to ferment and keep alive the spirit of discontent, which distracted that wretched country; now openly professing to

take part with the government against the people, and anon, stirring up the passions of the people against their rulers, promising them protection in her dominions, when their deeds of violence had drawn down upon them the chastisement, due to their open violation of their allegiance to their sovereign. Thus the wily queen, though by turns deceiving both parties, was enabled to hold in her hand the destinies of Scotland.

Under these circumstances, a trusty messenger, such as Ben Franklin, was an invaluable acquisition. Nor did the circumstance of his professing the Romish religion render him, in any degree, less fitted for such an office. Reasons, which will appear hereafter, had produced in his mind a singular aversion to all belonging to the Scottish court; and he implicitly believed the protestations made by Elizabeth, that her sole aim was, to promote a purer form of government, which, she declared, could

only be effected, by detaining Mary in the captivity in which she had placed her, and raising to the throne one better fitted to govern, than she had proved herself.

In the simplicity of his heart, Ben Franklin concluded that the religion of mother and son must be the same, and he felt therefore less scrupulous in aiding the exclusion of one papist from the throne, since a better was to be substituted. In all these excursions he was accompanied by his nephew, whose very name insured him a welcome reception among the reformers, for, led away by their notions of clanship, and knowing too that he professed the reformed religion, they naturally decided, that a portion of John Knox's spirit must descend upon his young relative. True they marvelled, that he should cling so fondly to one still in the bonds of iniquity; but they comforted themselves with the hope, that when Satan should have claimed his own, the youth,

having no longer any temptation to continue his wandering life, would quietly settle among them, and be no more exposed to dangers, arising from stormy seas, or, what was equally to be dreaded, the delusive notions of a blinded papist.

Many times the little vessel had passed to and fro, laden with divers articles of merchandize, and usually containing more than met the eye of the general observer. No danger was apprehended, for though, in these perilous times, pirates were far from uncommon, Ben Franklin held any such, who might appear in his latitude, in utter contempt, deeming them rather bugbears calculated to frighten timid women and children, than to raise a fear in the bold mariner's bosom. But he was destined to experience the insecurity of the mortal who boasted in his own strength.

It was on his return from a most successful cruise to the Scottish shores, where he had

disposed of his cargo much to his satisfaction, that honest Ben was pacing the deck of his little vessel, with conscious pride, exulting in increasing wealth, and drawing plans for further emolument. The number of persons on board had been encreased, by the addition of passengers, an event rendered not unfrequent by the fame which the little trader had acquired as a fast sailer.

The day had been hot, and all on board were assembled on the deck, to enjoy the cool breeze which had sprang up as the sun went down. Among the figures, whose dark garments, rendered more sombre by the deepening shades of evening, gave a solemn appearance to the deck, might be discerned the lighter drapery of female attire. The presence of an individual of the softer sex was a circumstance sufficiently remarkable, as how much soever the culture of their minds, together with early hours and substantial aliments, approach-

ed them to the masculine, still the rigid notions of decorum, which obtained, in the golden days of good Queen Bess, forbade ladies traveling far from home. The fact, however astonishing, was nevertheless certain ; two were actually seated on the deck of that trader ; and as far as could be discovered of her form and features, one was young and beautiful, while the other was of an age and bearing, well adapted to the character of duenna. The rest of the young lady's body-guard consisted of a venerable looking man, whose affectionate, though respectful attentions to his young mistress, marked him as a domestic of rather a superior stamp ; one who had probably watched her from the cradle to that age, when the frolic glee of the child, is about to be exchanged for the more dignified grace of the woman. Whether the homage usually paid to youth and beauty, or the knowledge, that their fellow

travellers were of gentle blood, caused the marked difference, with which they were treated by all around, we will not pretend to determine ; but it was evident, that such was yielded and received by the younger lady with all that winning courtesy, which shewed she was perfectly accustomed to it.

The guidance of the vessel was left principally to Harry Knox, who, absorbed in the performance of his duty, seemed regardless of all, save the path of his charge through the foaming billows. Suddenly the silence, which had for some time reigned in the little barque, was broken by the deep, hoarse tones of Ben Franklin exclaiming "sail a head!" an intimation for his nephew, who stood at the helm, to avoid the danger which might arise should the two vessels approach too near in the dim and uncertain shades of twilight. But the precautions taken to avoid so perilous a collision

proved unavailing, from the circumstance of the approaching vessel being bent on accomplishing the very end the other sought to avoid.

Bearing down upon the little trader, as a hawk pounces on his prey, it was along side in a moment, and a rough voice called out "heave to, or we fire." The attack was so sudden and unlooked for that there was no time for preparation to make defence. Yet the spirit of the British Sailor could not tamely yield, though Ben saw that the superior size of the enemy's ship, crowded as it was with grim and warlike forms, forbade all hope of effectual resistance. Snatching up a hatchet that lay beside him ; he called on the little crew to strike one blow for their colors, before they submitted the base thieves, who threatened so loudly.

More than one of the assailants paid with his life for this outrage on the peaceful trader ; but superior force prevailed ; and a blow from the captain of the band, which stretched poor Ben

on the deck, was the signal for further opposition to cease. In vain Harry Knox called on the men to revenge their leader's death, and only yield with life; he was in the grasp of his uncle's murderer, a man of herculean strength, who hurled him to the ground, with a force that for a few moments deprived him of sense.

The leader of the pirates, having thus freed himself from his youthful opponent, turned towards that part of the vessel occupied by the two females, who sat in speechless horror, spectators of the scene of blood and carnage which was acting around them. The elder lady had, at the first alarm, caught her young charge to her bosom, as if to screen her from the threatened danger; but though unable to free herself from that convulsive grasp, the native courage of the Scottish maiden impelled her to look on the strife, and while a shudder passed through her slight frame, as she beheld one after another struck down,

and the deck slippery with blood, still her eye was fixed on the leader of that bold band, with the gaze, that marks the bird fascinated by a snake.

As he approached, a deadlier hue spread over her face, but she moved not until she beheld the old man, who had so long been her faithful attendant, struck down at her feet, as he feebly essayed to raise his once vigorous arm, in defence of his young mistress, then, throwing off the detaining arms of her companion, she cast herself on her knees beside the fallen man, as if to screen him from further violence, and resolved to receive such in her own person, rather than see it inflicted on him. But her care was needless ; the hand that had dealt the blow was seldom known to strike twice, and the old man, after making a feeble effort to rise, stretched his limbs convulsively and expired.

Apparently, the death of this last victim had a softening effect on the pirate ; he threw the

reeking sword from his hand, as he besought the kneeling girl to be under no apprehension, at the same time proffering her assistance to rise. She shuddered as she drew more closely around her the tartan plaid, which had partially fallen from her shoulders, in her efforts to save the faithful attendant, and rising, with an air of dignity, pointed, as a reply, to the bleeding corpse at her feet ; then again took her station beside her friend.

The pirate followed her steps ; and in spite of the shuddering horror with which she recoiled from his touch, took her hand, for the purpose of leading her to his ship.

“ May I not die here ? ” she said, in a tone of forced calmness, “ I will give you what money I possess ; leave me but with Dame Margaret and I will think it well bestowed.”

“ Fair lady,” the pirate replied in a tone of softness, which contrasted strangely with his wild look, and still wilder deeds, “ fear no-

thing from me ; though at war with all mankind, and hunted like a wild beast, by those who owe their lives and fortunes to me, yet, to such as you, I can offer no violence ; for by my knightly oath I am sworn to defend the weak."

"Your knightly oath!" the lady said, for the first time looking steadfastly at the speaker, "I marvel to hear such words from the lips of—"

"A robber, you would say," he added with a smile of bitterness, as she hesitated to finish her speech, "well, be it so ; the world has forced that name upon me, and I must sustain the character it has in its wisdom invested me with ; aye, and I will sustain it," he gnashed his teeth in a momentary fit of passion, "even by such deeds as you have now witnessed, until the craven hounds, who forced me upon a rover's life, shall tremble, as the breeze wafts past them the daring exploits of the northern

pirate. But come, gentle lady, be pleased to exchange this paltry cockle shell for yon trim brigantine, that darts through the waves, as a bird cleaves the air; you must be content to seek the household of a free trader. Nay, look not so terrified; did I not say you have no cause for fear."

With a gentle but firm hand he led the trembling girl forward, and the next moment found her in a small cabin on board the pirate vessel; her faithful Margaret was beside her. When she found they were alone, the Scottish maiden gave way to the terror and grief which oppressed her, and throwing herself on the floor in agony of weeping, she continued some minutes deaf to the words of hope and consolation the old lady addressed to her; then starting up, she flew to the small window, and endeavoured to throw it up; but it mocked her efforts.

"What would you do, my child?" Dame

Margaret demanded, struck by the look of despair the poor girl turned upon her.

“What would I do?” she replied in a hollow tone, “seek security in death from dishonour; help me to unfasten this window, Dame Margery, and you shall see how long my father’s child will balance between the two.”

“Yet calm thee, my child,” the old lady said laying her trembling hand on the maiden’s arm, “we are alone, and it seems in safety, for surely had that man of violence intended harm to you, he would not have permitted me to share your captivity; he means doubtless to hold you to ransom.”

“To ransom!” the weeping girl replied, “Alas! who will now succour me, an orphan? will not those who hold my lands, rather rejoice that she who stood between a rich inheritance and them is pining in a prison. Oh! would that I had remained in Scotland, and never sought the

shores of England, at the call of one who perchance cares not for me."

"Nay, wrong not the noble youth, to whom your father in his wisdom affianced you," the old lady said somewhat sternly, "his answer to Lord Herries was such as became a discreet young man, one I warrant who will make a good husband."

"Yes, if coldness and caution in his expressions may be taken as a warrant," the maiden answered, while the proud blood mantled in her pale cheek. "Yet I would that we had rested with my kind friend Lord Herries, until Tracy had thought fit to fetch his bride; that would surely have become my station better than permitting me to travel like a carl's wife; and see what has come of it. My poor Jasper, too, the only being beside yourself, Dame Margaret, who loved me, slain before my eyes, while his only crime was an effort to save his mistress from worse than death."

“ He shared but the fate of the young and winsome,” Dame Margery replied, “ my old heart bled to see that bonny chield, who guided our ship so well, struck down by the savage man, who captured it. Poor boy, none but a savage could have harmed him.”

Impatient at the digression the dame was making from woes which it seemed to her should be all engrossing, the young lady paced up and down the little cabin ; seeking to calm her irritated feelings, lest she might be induced to utter, what might wound the feelings of Dame Margaret, who had watched over her infancy with the care and affection of her lost mother. By degrees she subdued the workings of a spirit which, though calm and gentle in its ordinary bearing, was, when roused, such as might be supposed to descend from those highland chiefs, who, rugged as their mountains, set at defiance, alike their native monarchs and the foreign invader.

More than one of the female descendants of these northern champions, had inherited their sires' dauntless valour, and had kept their castles, when the death or absence of their lords, had marked these abodes, as an easy prey to some neighbouring marauder. But far be it from the pen which undertakes to pourtray the Scottish maiden of our story, to describe her as one of these ferocious amazons, who, how much soever their daring feats of arms may excite our astonishment, can have no claim to our love.

The courage of woman to be really admirable must be a passive virtue ; and though the basis on which that virtue is founded, may rival the adamant in firmness, still it must be adorned outwardly, with those soft and feminine graces, which like the green and moss, give no intimation of the stone beneath. Yet, perchance, had she lived in those by-gone days, and been nurtured by a Christian Bruno, or a

black Agnes, she too had been famous in story, as the defender of a fortress, or the leader of a desperate sortie ; but her lot had been cast in times of comparative refinement, when the beauty and graces of an ill fated queen, had shone for a brief space, over her native land, and, like the genial influence of a sweet day in springtide, had called forth a thousand fair flowerets over what before was a barren wilderness. True, it might be said, that serpents lurked beneath those sweet flowers ; and while those who were within the immediate influence of her winning graces, sought to imitate their queen, too many among them adopted, with those graces, a levity of conduct, which is unfortunately sometimes considered as indispensable, in order to become charming among those who draw their style from that country of fascination—France.

A near relative of our heroine had been among the favourite attendants of Queen Mary,

and after the death of the young lady's mother, had for many years supplied her place beside the sweet orphan, in whom she found an apt pupil, to whom she might impart those graces, mental and bodily, she was so well calculated to teach both by precept and example. She had been educated in great seclusion, as those around her judged, that the engagement she was under, according to the tenor of her father's will, would be likely to prove a happy one only, in proportion as her young heart should be guarded from any other prepossession.

Enthusiastically attached to her father, the slightest wish expressed by him would have been a law to his daughter; and the idea of calling in question this plan of bestowing her upon a stranger bridegroom, would have appeared in the light of sacrilege. We will not pretend to determine how far the sight of her betrothed's portrait might render the arbitrary disposal of her hand palatable; certainly the

face she looked upon was not calculated to affright ; but the maiden placed the readiness with which she entered into her father's views, entirely to the love and veneration she owed her deceased parent's memory ; and far be it from us to derogate one tittle from a motive so pure and holy ; yet we may allow that opposition and mystery are both powerful ingredients in maintaining the fire of love. "The course of true love never did run smooth," is a truth no one feels disposed to contradict, but we seldom stop to enquire into the cause, or we should find how entirely it has its origin in the perversity of human nature. Love allowed to run smoothly along, would, nine times out of ten, cease to exist ; a dead calm becomes its destruction ; but present a barrier to its course, and instantly you convert the peaceful stream, which but a moment before threatened to stagnate, into an impetuous torrent, which gaining a new impetus from every obstacle it has sur-

mounted, rushes madly along without allowing the unfortunate being, who is under its influence, a pause to reflect whither its course tends.

But leaving all such useless disquisitions, we will return to the deck of the pirate ship, which was cowering fast before a favoring wind, and shaping her course in a northward direction. The most prominent figures, at that moment, occupying the deck, were those of the pirate captain, and one apparently dead or dying lying at his feet. The pirate was a man of about fifty years of age, of the middle height, robust and well proportioned, with a grace of movement, that might well have suited a court; his face was handsome, notwithstanding the deep lines which had been drawn across the forehead; fiery passions had doubtless some share in tracing those lines, yet the habitual expression of that brow seemed stern resolve, rather than turbulent passion. His dress too was strangely at variance with his present situation; the

stranger wore the belt and spur of knighthood, and, by his proud bearing, appeared to claim all that respect which, in the days of chivalry, was so fully accorded to the knightly character.

Such as we have now described him the pirate stood, his arms folded on his breast, and gazing with a look of intense earnestness on the prostrate form before him. It would be difficult to decipher the expression of his face at that moment; it did not carry in it the anxiety, which might be felt by one who held the youth in esteem; still less was it the look of a stranger, whose sympathy is excited by the sight of suffering: the stedfast gaze seemed rather to imply some expectation, that, each moment it was rivetted on the motionless being beneath it, must produce some change, that would satisfy a feeling the gazer himself could scarcely analyse.

“ Surely he is dead !” the pirate at last muttered; “ and if he is, why should I care ?

Strange that twice my path should be crossed by his very image ! one was an infant, and the sight of him almost unmanned me ; and now, here lies one, slain by my own hand, stamped with the same image :—’Tis but a trick of fancy,” he continued, after a moment’s pause, “ I care not if he lives or dies.” He turned slowly away, and paced the deck for a few moments ; then again, as if drawn thither by some powerful attraction, he could not resist, the pirate resumed his station by the body. A deep drawn sigh bespoke returning consciousness, and the youth unclosed his eyes. The pirate started as if an adder had stung him.

“ By heaven,” he muttered again, “ ’tis himself !” he drew his hand across his eyes, as if to assure himself it was not a dream ; then to the youth’s question “ Where am I ?” he answered with affected indifference,—“ Where are you ? on board the Vulture, and my prisoner.”

“ And where is my uncle ?”

“ I know nothing of him you call your uncle ; some among the crew of yon little nutshel dared to show fight, and were, as they deserved to be, knocked on the head ; perchance your uncle was one of them.”

“ And where are you taking me ?” Harry Knox again demanded.

“ To my northern fortress,” the pirate replied in a tone of bitter irony, “ there you will have the roaring waves, and the shrieking sea-mew for your lullaby ; but you will be far from the voice of human beings : that at least is a blessing.”

“ Will not money set me free ?”

“ Money is a great temptation ; but we rovers have our fancies, as well as others ; mine leads me, at this moment, to hold you a prisoner ; and I doubt if all the treasures you could lay before me, would bribe me to forego my purpose ; and certes less philosophy than even I can boast, would be required to resist the

fascination of the glittering heaps, the mate of a small trader could spread before his captor. Your services may stand me in better stead; and before long I shall have in you one of my most trusty followers.”

Harry Knox only vowed that day should never arrive; but prudence, or more probably exhaustion, for once stood his friend, and he forbore to utter the thoughts that burned within him. A thousand times Harry Knox wished death had been his portion, as well as that of his brave uncle; nor could he comprehend why among those swept from the living, he alone was spared. The person of the pirate was strange to him; yet, from the tenor of his words, the young sailor was led to suppose his preservation was owing to some degree of interest the stranger felt towards him. His thoughts then reverted to his uncle, whom he had seen slain by the same hand stretched out for his protection. The time when young and

helpless he was given to that uncle's care ; and a thousand instances of his kindness and affection all crowded upon his memory.

The thought of having lost the kind old man, for ever, was agony ; and Harry Knox drawing over his face the cloak, which had been cast round him, gave way to a burst of tears he could not restrain. When he had at length succeeded in subduing a feeling of weakness, of which he was rather ashamed, the young sailor raised his head, and finding all about him were busy, each at his own post, ventured to get up, a movement which he performed with some little difficulty, as he was stiff from the bruises he received, when so rudely hurled to the deck.

The moon was shedding her mild light on the restless waves, and the vessel, with its white sails illumined by her silvery rays, contrasted beautifully with the sable hue of all beyond that portion of the water it was passing

over; deep masses of cloud lay heaped on the verge of the horizon, mingling in perspective with the broad billows of the Atlantic, and forming together a semblance of those mountains, fabled to be heaped up, by the impious Titans to aid their daring invasion of the empyrean heights. Silence reigned in the vessel, save when the man employed to heave the lead, uttered from time to time his monotonous chaunt.

Harry Knox felt the calm in his soul; a few moments before, despair and grief had dominion over it; now hope, in his breast, and like the halcyon of old, spreading her downy wing over the troubled hours of thought, hushed them to repose. The cool night air revived him, and he felt that though fate had inflicted a deadly blow, she had not yet destroyed him. A step approached, and the pirate captain again stood before him. Apparently, the observation of his captive's face and figure had not yet

proved satisfactory; for the pirate again commenced the scrutiny. The pale light by which he now beheld the youth, harmonizing as it did with his pallid countenance, probably assimilated him more closely to one whom that man of crime had looked upon when the hues of death were upon him, and as he gazed on Harry Knox, a visible shudder agitated his muscular frame, in spite of the effort he made to suppress the emotion.

“Your name, young sir?” he at last said.

“Harry Knox,” was the brief reply.

“Knox!” the pirate repeated, “are you then belonging to that wretched fanatic, who has been the primary cause of all the troubles which have torn Scotland to pieces?”

“I claim not affinity with John Knox, if you speak of him; nor can I give you much information respecting myself; my parents died in my childhood, and the kind old woman who fostered their boy, cared not to speak much of

them ; sometimes, indeed, she would say they both came of gentle blood, but that is all I learned from her ; my poor uncle, who took me at her death, could not, or would not give me any further information respecting my birth."

" Were you born in Scotland ?"

" I believe so ; at least I remember no other home than the cottage the good old woman died in."

" And where was that situated ?"

" North of Dunbar, in a village called—"

" By heaven, 'tis the very same !" the pirate exclaimed speaking to himself. " Strange that after the lapse of years, what I then so ardently desired should come to pass ; yet the likeness must be mere accident, since a son of his, though not lawfully begotten, would not be ignorant of his birth ; he must not escape me, till I know more of him," then turning to Harry Knox, he said in a kinder tone, " you need rest, my young friend ; go down below,

where you will find a hammock slung for you ; it shall hereafter be your own fault, if you have cause to regret the chance which has thrown you among us."

He turned abruptly away, and presently after, one of the crew came to inform him, it was the captain's orders he should go down, where every thing was prepared for his accommodation. The next morning Harry Knox found himself too stiff to rise, and thus he was held in "durance vile," until the ship arrived at her destined port. But we must reserve the description of the pirate's haunt to another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

How often do weak mortals lament the ills that beset them ; each loves to dwell on the trials and troubles he has been called on to endure, a contemplation, which never fails to confirm the belief, that each individual has had a larger portion of bitter mixed in the cup than has fallen to the share of his fellow men ; but let the good and evil be weighed in a just balance, and it will speedily be found, the depression is not so entirely on the dark side, as

at the first view, we may be led to expect ; would the joys we find in our path be so keenly enjoyed, without the contrast they form to the dark and troubled moments, that have preceded them ? The flash of light which springs from darkness in the Cashmerean clime, seems brighter than that which shines on without interruption, through the sunny lapse of a long summer day, of which it is but the harbinger.

Similar thoughts might have passed through the mind of Harry Knox, had the sudden transition, from the gloom and darkness of a small cabin, to fresh air and sunshine, left him power to reflect. Then, the view which burst upon him, as he eagerly gazed upon the deck, chased all else from his mind ; he beheld a rugged and precipitous coast, magnificent in its stern beauty ; a beauty, which like the impression, stamped by sense on the human countenance, awes, but cannot win us. Bold masses of rock, thrown together by the unsparing hand of nature,

presented their surface to the mid-day sun, which sought in vain to impart warmth and fertility, to their black and barren soil. No foliage was there to soften, with its varied tints, the harsh landscape around ; such was the young sailor's future prison, and he felt, that once a captive in the island, he had bid farewell to civilization, and had become a denizen in a country, hitherto untrodden by the foot of man ; his heart, that the moment before had expanded with the feeling of joy, bright skies and sparkling waters naturally inspired, felt like lead, as he looked on this scene of desolation. The preparations made for landing, in some degree drew his attention from the unpleasing contemplation ; the pirates had run the ship into a narrow creek, which lay between the rocks, and after a brief passage, opened into a basin sufficiently large, to allow the vessel to ride in safety. One by one, the prisoners were brought from below ; their number was small,

as most of those on board the trader, had fallen in the endeavour to protect their property.

Among those borne on deck, were the Scottish maiden and her ancient attendant; and Harry Knox observed with surprise and indignation, that, besides the bandage over her eyes, which she wore in common with the other captives, the former was bound hand and foot, a rigour which proceeded from the resistance she had made to those who sought to bear her from the cabin.

The spirit of Harry Knox rose as he saw a helpless woman thus treated, and forgetful of his own dangerous position, he was rushing forward to her rescue, when the captain's voice sounded close beside him. "Beware what you do, young man; my hands are apt to forget their peaceful character if roughly handled, and can shew the fangs and claws of the wolf. Fear nothing for yon damsel, she is safe, provided she does not provoke me too far. Her

ransom, must needs be a rich one, for she seems of gentle blood, and she may perchance, do me good service in a country, where I have few friends, but many foes. You too must be hood-winked; it were dangerous to let those eyes of yours pry into the secret entrance of our lair."

A rough hand placed a bandage over his eyes, and the next moment, Harry felt himself lowered from the ship's side; the boat which received him, shot off; a few strokes of the oar brought him to the landing place, and after being lifted from the boat, the young sailor was hurried along what he judged, by the chill that pervaded his frame, was a stone passage. Arrived at the end, his guide unbound his eyes, and telling him in a gruff tone, it was the captain's will, that he remained there for a time, left him.

The room in which our hero found himself confined, was singular in appearance, and

had doubtless, in the olden time, served as the cell of some anchorite, who, weary of the busy scene the world afforded, had, in this retreat, sought quiet and leisure, for the contemplation of that final hour, when, as far as regards this mortal life, man is as he never had been. Idleness seemed to have formed no part of the holy man's character, since the toil and labour, he had voluntarily undergone, might be inferred from their efforts. The hermitage, for thus we must term it, was hollowed in a solid rock; it measured upwards of thirty feet in length, and nearly twenty in breadth; a square hole of narrow dimensions, gave entrance to this singular abode, which might be closed up at pleasure, by a stone of the same size. Near this doorway, the rock had been cut into the rude representation of a bed, with a pillow of the same unyielding material; at the other end of the apartment, was an equally luxurious

couch; in the middle, a hearth was visible, having above it a hole cut in the roof, serving the double purpose of a passage, for the egress of the smoke, and the ingress of a scanty portion of light. There was nothing inviting in the contemplation of this desolate dwelling; at least in the estimation of one, whose knowledge of the world, was yet too green, to have damped the youthful ardour with which he had entered it. Satiety had not yet touched with her withering hand, the gay banquet which seemed to await his enjoyment; friendship had not yet exposed her hollowness; love had not yet shewn his fickleness, life was fresh, and bright, and beautiful. Oh, why should time have power to destroy these fairy dreams of human happiness.

After pacing up and down this frightful den a few times, Harry Knox cast himself in despair on the stone couch, and burying his face in his hands, gave way to all the miserable

feelings, his strange situation naturally excited. He was roused from this bitter contemplation, by a noise at the entrance of his prison house, and ashamed of being found thus unmanned, he made a desperate effort to rouse himself, and advanced to meet, or if necessary, oppose the intruder. The stone was slowly displaced, and the pirate captain entered, while the same savage looking man, who had conducted Harry Knox to his place of confinement, shewed his fierce countenance for one moment over his leader's shoulder, and then drew back.

The look of the captain, was stern and determined, and his right hand grasped a pistol, he gazed at the youth who advanced towards him, until his own eye quailed beneath the steady look with which it was encountered. Again some strange emotion seemed to shake that man of blood, he turned away, and striding to the entrance looked forth on the wild scenery, as if

he sought to catch from its stern features, a portion of the firmness he had lost. At length he turned again towards the youth, and carelessly placing the pistol in his belt, he assumed a softer and more courteous demeanour. Glancing his eye round the cell he asked.

“How like you this abode, fair sir? methinks a turn upon the greensward would not be unwelcome, after being cooped up here for some hours, and yet, how often have I sought it of my own free will, when weary of my wanderings, or willing to be alone for a season, I have hailed it as the weary bird might bless the sight of his own loved nest; but then I was not forced to stay, that had altered the case.”

“Yet you scruple not to put such restraint upon me, though I am at a loss to guess, what good you look to derive from such a captive; better hold me to ransom, name the sum, and

provided it does not exceed the bounds of moderation, I may perchance find some one to stand my friend."

The pirate laughed. "Ransom!" he said, "I seek not to make money by you; the metal you are composed of rings fairly, but I must win it after my own fashion. How say you, will you taste the sweets to be found in the life of a free trader?"

"Call your trade by its right name, and I will answer you."

"And what name would your wisdom bestow on that of which you can have seen but little?"

"The name of robbery and murder," the youth answered hardily, "the name, which alone befits the actions of men, who, in defiance of every law, go about seeking whom they may destroy, and like hungry wolves, slaying and devouring their prey; and it is with such as these, you ask me to league

myself — never; — work your worst by me, either with murder or imprisonment, I defy you.”

The pirate’s brow grew dark. “Rash boy,” he said, “you know not who it is you brave, nor how small a thing it would be, to give you the death, you so daringly defy; one bullet from this little weapon, or one sign to those close by, and you are heard of no more, it is enough I will it; here, at least, I am king, with those at my command eager to evince their loyalty. But come, I mean to deal kindly with you, something, no matter what, inclines me towards you; once more then, will you fight under the banner of the avenger?”

“My uncle’s murderer! not for all the wealth you shall ever gain by your trade of blood—enough! you have my answer, if this must be my grave, leave me in peace.”

“And is that dark eyed girl yonder, who is doubtless the idol of your worship, nothing to

you, for when was there one of your age, without such follies? is it nothing, I say to you that she is in my power, and that I can with a breath, save her from, or condemn her to a fate to which death itself would be a blessing."

"I know nothing of the lady," Harry replied, "save as one in the same bondage with myself, yet would I do much to save her from such as you."

"From me she has nothing to fear," the pirate rejoined, curling his lip. "Such toys have no longer power to fetter my thoughts and actions; glory is my mistress, she it is leads me on and nerves my arm in battle; and yet if I would still spare a thought on a fair lady, such a one could be found," he drew from his bosom a miniature, and holding it towards Harry Knox, said in a tone of deep and bitter feeling. "This is one not easily forgotten, and, outcast as I am, she still thinks of, and loves me."

The young sailor gazed on the picture, in which he beheld beauty, such as till that moment had never met his eye ; all that the painter, or the still more brilliant imagination of the youthful lover could pourtray, was embodied, in that perfect specimen of female loveliness ; but faultless as the features were, it was perhaps even more to the expression of benignant sweetness, blended with mind and dignity, that the face owed its powerful attraction. 'The eye of Harry Knox glanced from the portrait to the pirate, as if he sought to discover what secret affinity of thought or look could draw such opposite beings to each other.

“ Is she still living ?” he asked.

“ Living !” the pirate repeated in a hollow tone, “ aye, to curse the cause of her misfortunes—living to weep tears of blood at the fate, that bound her to one who has been her bane and his own ; but it boots not to dwell on the past,” he added, as he returned the miniature

to his breast. "I must be the cold unfeeling monster men pourtray me ; yet there are times, when the worm of recollection gnaws with a tooth so sharp that reason reels beneath the pang."

"Why not abandon the life you have chosen?" the youth demanded, touched by the expression of anguish which crossed the brow of this strange man. "Why not return to the world, and give up the companionship of such wretches, as you are mixed up with?"

"Ask the wild cat wherefore she does not quit her savage brood, and seek the comfort of the domestic hearth ;—ask the famished wolf why he forsakes not the lair, that shelters him, and fawns not on man to be fed ; their answer is mine—the hand of man is against us, and though we might forsake our fierceness, and become the craven things they would have us, yet the recollection of what we were, will be enough to justify their loathing."

“ Have your deeds then been so dark, since you turned rover, that you suppose men to thirst for your blood ?”

“ It is for deeds they charge me with, before I swore to be their scourge, that they hunt for my life ; but I am wasting time in these idle recollections, and you they cannot concern ; yet the sight of you has more than once brought days long passed, to my remembrance, and though it pains me I would have you near ; perchance I hope to hear from you some tidings of my native land ; but you say you left Scotland in early life.”

“ Yes, but of late I have often been there ; my uncle was master of the little trader you captured, and I took many trips with him to her shores.”

“ And know you aught of our poor Queen ?” the pirate eagerly demanded, “ are hopes still given by the false English usurper, that Mary

Stuart will again be restored to her birth-right?"

"Her friends are still busy in her behalf, but our royal mistress keeps too strict a watch, to give them good hope of success; and surely those who wish well to Scotland, would not recall one to the throne who has proved herself so unfit to govern."

"And who deprived Mary Stuart of her right? was it not the false bastard Murray, and let the fate that awaited him, bear witness how acceptable in the sight of heaven, was his treachery to his anointed sovereign. The only joy I have known since the day I quitted Scotland, was, when it was told me that the bullet of Bothwellhaugh had paid the debt; which every true born Scot owed the hypocrite."

"You are a Queen's man."

"Would to God my blood could restore the much injured Princess to her rights, it should

be poured forth freely ; but are there no noble hearts among the boasted chivalry of England, who will interfere to save a defenceless woman from the cruelty of her jealous rival ?”

“ I meddle not in affairs that do not concern me,” Harry Knox answered carelessly, not doubting that he beheld one of those Scottish nobles, forced to fly their country to expiate their attachment to an erring and beautiful Queen, who had found means to bind more than one so strongly in her chains, that danger and even death itself was unable to dissolve the spell her fascinations had cast around them. Many rumours of plots, formed by such daring spirits, to assassinate Elizabeth, had been circulated in England, for the purpose of exasperating the people against the captive Queen ; and such a desperado seemed now before the young sailor, who, shrouding his nobility under the character of a captain of pirates, was ready to adventure himself in any enterprise how

desperate soever, which promised a chance of liberty to his captive mistress. The pirate seemed to read what was passing in his companion's mind, and to change the current of thought, from a suspicion, which might have produced considerable embarrassment to himself, said with a good humoured smile, "A truce to politics, I only sought to find which way you inclined; but since you care for neither party, the better you will do for a free rover; the sea is our country, and all our allegiance is bowed to Neptune, who is a most bountiful sovereign, and never fails to enrich those his faithful subjects, by sending in their way vessels, laden with the spoils of lazy land-lubbers, who cannot find themselves on his domains without showing by the tortures they endure, that they have no claim to his kindness; but to return to the purport of my visit to you, in this your cell; I seek not to make a

prisoner of you, unless you prove refractory. All egress from this island is carefully guarded against ; therefore, beware how you attempt to leave us without permission, since there are those ever on the watch, who will shoot you with as little ceremony as they would use in bringing down a buck. Be cautious too in giving offence to any of my people ; at present, they expect a large sum for your ransom, for, to keep a useless prisoner, and one who might hereafter give a clue to this lair, would be looked upon as a piece of folly, which would perchance cost all our lives. When you know more of me, it will be time to decide whether you still persist in rejecting my proffered friendship or not ; should such indeed be your resolution, I will not hold out a hope that you will ever be restored to liberty ; that would be dangerous, seeing you are young, bold, and active. Meanwhile, you are free to exercise

your limbs as far as the island will permit ; use your own discretion how far you make friends with any of my lambs ; your own observation will quickly teach you, how far they are to be offended with impunity—remember your ransom is the password ;—but my sentinel grows impatient ; and now for the golden mine I trust I have found in the little self-willed jade, who seems disposed to dispute my right to dispose of her according to my good pleasure. By our lady ! she is a right noble creature and would make a mate for a rover worth all the gentle dames between this and St. Bee's head. She will not tell her name ; but I must learn it though a little torture may be necessary to force the secret from her.—But, come, I will see you provided with quarters more to your taste than my hermitage ; though it may be you will find our mode of living somewhat rough at best ; but custom, you know, is second nature."

They left the hermitage together, and taking a contrary direction to that by which Harry Knox had been conducted to it, came in sight of the building which served as the abode of the pirates.

CHAPTER V.

RESTORED to liberty, as far at least as the power of traversing at will the small island, of which he had thus unwillingly become an inhabitant, Harry Knox sought to gain some knowledge of the lawless race, among whom his lot was cast. All hope of restoration to his native land was cut off, since, had the price of his liberty been fixed, to whom could he look for the payment? With his uncle had perished the last being, who was in any degree

united to him by the ties of kindred. True he had rendered an important service to one high in rank, but the service was probably considered sufficiently repaid by the benefit already conferred; and there was little hope, that the cry of a captive creditor would reach the ear of his noble debtor from so great a distance.

The island, as we before observed, was rocky and desolate; yet Harry could perceive, that it was to all appearance the most fertile among those lying around, and bore the marks of some attempts at cultivation; but whether this had been the work of its primitive inhabitants, or of those who, like the pirate band, had sojourned there for a time, there was no possibility of determining. The natives seemed few in number, and appeared desirous to avoid giving cause of offence to their ferocious visitors, who, on their part, were equally disposed to maintain a friendly correspondence with them.

The spot selected by the pirates for their

abode, was situated at some distance from the village, or town ; it was a wild and romantic spot, suiting well with the lawless crew, who had chosen it for their resting place. It lay at the foot of a mountain, singular in its appearance, and possessing some remarkable quality, which caused it to shine and sparkle during certain months in the year, in an extraordinary manner ; a phœnomenon however observable only at a distance, since a near approach dispelled the illusion. Ever prone to seek a supernatural cause for what passed the limits of their simple understanding, the peasants were wont to regard this appearance as the effect of magic, and hence arose the name of the enchanted carbuncle, by which this mountain was designated.

It is probably to the veneration with which this spot was regarded, that may be traced the loneliness which reigned around ; no vestige of human habitation was near, save the ruins of

an ancient castle, whose large, though shattered, donjon, in the centre of many vaults, and crumbling arches, shewed evident tokens of the strength it once possessed. Some proud Baron had here placed the seat of his power, where he lorded it over his fellowmen; now how changed ! that hall, which had echoed with the clang of knightly tread, the merry banquet and the sound of minstrelsy, had become the abode of the owl and the bittern. These again had given place to creatures, wild and untamed as themselves, and the sound of revelry once more arose round the desolate hearth; but they were sounds which awoke the thrill of fear and horror in the hearts of those who caught their echoes, for they rose from the brutal revels of men, whose trade was blood, and whose vassals were held to commemorate the death and spoil of their fellow creatures. In this band were found men of various nations; the Scot, forgetful in the moment of excitation of the

steady caution which is his countrymen's characteristic; the joyous son of Erin not losing, even in this state of degeneration, that spirit of life and gaiety, which makes sunshine and joy wherever he appears; with these were mingled the volatile Frenchman, and the sullen Englishman, whose sombre hues of character, like the dark tints in a picture, served to bring out more prominently the more brilliant tints around. All these were combined under the command of one, whom a lengthened sojourn in their respective countries, rendered a fitting leader to such a crew, and whose enterprising spirit had, in early youth, been remarked by a sagacious and experienced minister, who prognosticated of him, that "he would indeed do great things," and that "it was meet his adversaries should have an eye to him," but ambition lured him to destruction, and following that fallacious guide, he had been led to trample on every law, human, and divine; crime after

crime stained the page of his history, and after a short triumph in the attainment of his daring schemes and lawless wishes, he was hurled from the pinnacle of power on which he believed himself firmly seated, a mark for the finger of man, the associate of robbers and murderers.

Of all his band, two only were admitted to any share in his confidence ; these were his constant attendants, and it seemed to Harry Knox, that there were moments when it would have been a relief to their haughty master, to find himself free from their observation ; but one or the other was sure to hover at no great distance from his path, and though their manner towards him was that of an inferior towards one in high rank, still there lurked something in it, which bespoke its being conferred by their desire, rather than from necessity ; while under an appearance of frank cordiality, and studied

kindness, on the part of their leader, lurked suspicion and hatred.

One part of the ruins had been appropriated to the Scottish maiden and her companion ; and amidst the trials to which such a residence exposed her, some consolation might be found in the studied respect, with which the fair captive found herself treated, a line of conduct to which the pirate was inclined, partly by the respect, arising from the slight view he had obtained of her unbending spirit, but still more by the hope of a golden harvest to be reaped from the gratitude of her family, when the opportunity should occur of restoring her to them in safety. No one was suffered to molest her in this rude retreat ; one of the natives was induced to give her attendance, and by degrees she became reconciled to her singular situation. All the pirate's address was exerted to discover the name of his prisoner ; that she was of gentle blood, might easily be ascertained in an age,

when the line of demarcation, which separated the different grades of society, was more broadly defined than at present—yet how such a one should be found in a small trader, and so poorly attended, was a question not easily solved.

At first the pirate was led to conjecture that love, all defying love, had induced this fair damsel to trust herself in a frail barque at the mercy of wind and wave, to follow the object of her choice ; but the declaration of her supposed lover, as well as his own observation on their subsequent conduct towards each other, had fully invalidated such a belief. All that he could gather respecting the lady was, that she had been placed under the care of Ben Franklin, with strict orders for watchfulness : that he was to place her in the hands of persons appointed by one high in the English court ; and that the reward of her safe conveyance was to be ample ; but none were acquainted with the name of the fair stranger. At length the pirate resolved

to seek from the Scottish maiden herself the wished for information, and for this purpose he sent to demand an interview.

The messenger who bore the summons found her seated in the deep recess of a window ; a book lay open on her knee, and her eyes were bent on it ; but she had long ceased to note the characters traced therein ; her thoughts were straying to her own loved Highland home ; a thousand endearing objects came crowding to her recollection, and, as the contrast with her present desolate situation became, from each remembrance, more forcible, tears rolled from beneath the long dark lashes, that fringed her downcast eye. As the messenger signified his master's commands, a flush of mingled emotion, fear and pride, flitted for a moment over her face, redeeming it from the charge which might just before have been brought against it, that of being too pallid. As she listened to his message, a positive refusal to obey the mandate

sprang to her lips, but a warning gesture from the old lady caused her to retract it.

“ Say to your master,” she answered, “ that I will attend him, since I cannot choose but obey,” then seeing the man waited to conduct her, she arose, adding, “ come, dame Margery, we will not risk increasing our jailer’s ferocity by delay.”

With a firm step, she followed the guide through several ruinous arches ; at length he stopped before the door of what had formerly been the banquetting hall ; throwing it open, he motioned her to enter, while he himself drew back as if his purpose had been to retire ; but as they entered, he took advantage of a projection near the door to conceal himself, in such a manner, that he was enabled to observe all that passed. The beauty of the young captive had made an impression on the heart of this man, one of those whom we have mentioned as the companions or spies of the captain, who,

judging his leader's feelings by his own, believed, that under pretence of holding her to ransom, the pirate was, in truth, only waiting a fitting opportunity to make the prize his own.

“ But I will disappoint him,” was the internal resolution of this worthy satellite ; “ and if he has a thought of violence, I shall have the better chance of winning that sweet creature's heart as her defender.”

Meanwhile the Scottish maiden had stopped irresolute, when she found herself in the presence of one she believed to be the most savage of human beings ; the sight she had obtained of the pirate, as he ascended the side of the vessel, striking down those who opposed him, was not calculated to impress her favorably in his behalf ; all of dark and horrible, that the disturbed imagination might conjure up, was coupled in her mind with his image, and her resolution well nigh forsook her, when she felt that dark and fiery eye was upon her. A voice

met her ear, but those could not be the tones of a pirate; she raised her eyes, and they rested on a form, whose easy and graceful movements seemed to claim affinity to a court, rather than to the haunt of robbers.

This singular man was clad in a suit of light armour, composed of rings so flexible, as to obey every movement of the wearer; his bonnet with its heron's plume, had been raised from his head, at the entrance of his captive; but what formed a most extraordinary contrast to the rank of the Buccaneer, were the golden spurs and knightly belt. On his part the pirate was scarcely less struck with the maiden, who stood gazing on him with astonishment. Hitherto he had only seen her under the influence of terror and disgust, averting her eyes as from an object unsightly and appalling; now fear was lost in wonder, and unconsciously she permitted this much dreaded being to obtain a leisurely survey of her face and form. She

was of a darker style of beauty than generally distinguishes the daughters of Caledonia, but the strict union, which for some years had reigned between the countries of France and Scotland, had caused the dark eyes of the fascinating dames of France to be frequently transported to the more northern clime.

Some such mixture of the black eye of France with the blue of Scotland, had produced in the present instance, an eye which partook of the properties of both, combining the brilliancy and expression of the jetty orb, with the mild and heart touching pathos of its rival. Her hair was very black, and shewed to full advantage, a brow like polished marble, at the present moment her cheek was of the same hue, but in days of safety and happiness, the eloquent blood spoke in them; her beauty was of too intellectual a cast, to please the crowd; many would pass her by with the appellation of an interesting girl, but there were those,

who looked and looked again, and could still discover some trait before unnoticed ; the varied shades of feeling ever changing the expression of that brow formed an attraction beyond the power of mere beauty, and cast a more potent spell over those who could appreciate the charm.

For some moments neither seemed disposed to break the silence, which astonishment on one side and admiration on the other, had induced ; at length the native modesty of the Scottish maiden stirred in her bosom, reminding her that she was regarding a stranger with too bold a scrutiny ; the blood rushed to her brow, dying with its rich tints her beautiful face, and throbbing in her temples with a violence, which threatened to burst the blue channels that bounded its course ; the pirate was touched with her evident confusion, and advancing a few steps.

“ Gentle lady,” he said, “ fear nothing ; the chance of war in throwing you among us, has

placed you in the hands of one, who has ever held sacred his knightly oath, as regards the weak and unprotected ; my unhappy fate, by removing me for a season from those of my kindred, and associating me with the vile, may warrant your dread of a leader of pirates ; but I have not always been such as you now behold me, and the hope has not yet left me of once more regaining my proper sphere. Meanwhile our necessities, lady, are great, and the hope of obtaining from the liberality of your friends, when you are again restored to them in safety, a recompense worthy the fair prize we yield up, constrains me for a time to impose, what may seem to you grievous restraint, which shall be speedily removed, when I have obtained the assurance that your ransom shall be paid ; but that I may know with whom to treat respecting your liberation, it is necessary you confide to me your name and rank."

" And what warrant have I," the maiden re-

plied " that you will fulfil your fair promise ?"

" The warrant of a knight's word, never yet pledged in vain."

" But I have no certainty that you are what you represent yourself ; I am but a simple girl, unacquainted with the customs of the world ; yet I have heard that knights are sworn to protect the weak and oppressed ; how far your character answers this description may be guessed by the scenes in which I have seen you an actor ; a small vessel attacked by superior force, and its harmless crew massacred, by one whose knightly vow, it seems, bound him to defend them. Your speech is fair, your garb is also fair, but your deeds agree but ill with them."

" Towards you, fair lady, I have surely done nothing to blemish my character as a knight and a gentleman."

" Count you it as nothing, that I was forci-

bly seized on, that my attendant was slain even at my feet, and that too by your own hand? Sir knight, surely it is a blot in your escutcheon to have stained that hand with the blood of an old man, and a menial!"

The pirate's brow grew dark.

"Your speech is bold, maiden," he sternly said, "and you little know the risk you run in thus taunting me."

"Now the saints be gracious to us!" exclaimed the old lady, who till this moment had stood wrapped in speechless horror as she listened to her young mistress's dialogue with one she looked upon as a bandit, notwithstanding his change of costume, "heard any body the like of this! the child speaks to him as fearlessly as if he were of her own kindred;—but do not heed her, sir robber—or sir knight I should have said, the sweet girl means not to offend you."

"Well then, good dame," the pirate answer-

ed, "since you better comprehend than your young lady, the consequences of offending me, I pray you, in your wisdom, to tell me the name of this fair lady, and whither you were bound, when it was my good hap to fall in with so lovely a prize."

"Her name—" the old woman began eagerly, but was stopped by her young mistress.

"Peace, dame Margaret," she said, "I pray you to be silent; if harm befalls us, at least it shall never be known, whose name is disgraced in my person."

"And what can you hope to gain, foolish maiden, by thus obstinately refusing to give me the only means of restoring you to your friends. Can you suppose that I will risk my own life, and the lives of my followers, by taking you to those who would without scruple hang us up like dogs? but let me know to whom you wish to be conveyed, and when your ransom shall be

paid, I will find means to have you sent in safety."

"I would willingly purchase my safety and freedom," she answered, while a shade of sadness passed over her brow, and a tear trembled in her eye, "but those who hold my lands will perhaps grudge the gold, which must be paid to bring back the orphan to her inheritance; yet there is one at the court of England who surely would give something to redeem me."

The pirate shook his head.

"England," he repeated, "I thought your kindred were in Scotland, thither I might have had you conveyed, but to England it is impossible."

"True, my lands lie in Scotland, but I have already told you Sir Knight it might avail me little to give notice of my captivity to those, who hold, and, at my death, will inherit them."

"And to whom will you apply at the English court? not surely to the Queen; she loves

not youth and beauty so well, as to give ought for them."

"No, it is not from the Queen of England, I hope for deliverance, but from one, with whom it was my father's good pleasure I should wed."

"So, so," thought the pirate, "an affianced bride! what ransom may I not expect from the disconsolate lover, this piece of information is worth a few broad pieces."

"And are you sworn to secrecy, fair lady, on the name of him also, who is doubtless expecting you, with a bridegroom's ardour?"

"Who will convey a scroll to him if I pen one?" the lady answered, evading a direct reply.

"Marry, that shall one of my people; for myself I care not to set foot within the precincts of Elizabeth's court, though, it may be I should find more than one there, who would welcome me for old acquaintance sake."

“ But will you not suffer me to go with the messenger ?” she asked anxiously.

“ Certes ! that were foolish policy, maiden,” the pirate answered with a smile, “ perchance when the goshawk was fairly reclaimed, I might look in vain for a reward ; and yet I may surely look for one, seeing I have not suffered one feather to be ruffled, since the gay bird was in my keeping.”

“ How say you, sir stranger,” the maiden answered, her proud spirit rising at this implied mistrust, “ how say you, that you are indeed a belted knight, yet dare to mistrust a lady’s word ?”

“ Nay, it is not your faith I doubt, fair maiden, but the faith of those, into whose hands you are to be delivered, and who might think fit to ask a few questions of your attendant, he would find difficulty in answering, and then what should save the knave from the

gallows, which however he may deserve them, I would not he gained in my service."

"I pledge my word that harm shall not befall him you send; for sure my influence cannot be at so low an ebb, that I should sue in vain for the safety of one who has done me good service."

"I well believe your influence, all that youth and beauty must ever claim, and I also believe your intentions fair and noble, sweet lady; but cruel fate obliges me to be cautious, even when I most wish to confide; think how slight a word may betray me to those, who thirst for my blood; were it for one moment known who holds you captive, even the fidelity of those around me, and which I have proved a thousand times, might yield to the tempting bribe, that I doubt not would be held out as the recompense of my betrayal. Something I risk in thus approving without disguise in your

presence, fair lady, since an accurate description might set the blood hounds on a right scent ; but your noble nature would scorn to betray the unfortunate ; and for this good dame, who, I see, still hovers between the thought, whether I am angel or devil, I shall find means to charm her tongue ere she quits my territories.”

There was something of an implied threat lurking in this last speech, and the poor girl who had beheld one faithful attendant slain in her defence, thrilled with dread at the idea that this too was about to be sacrificed, to the safety of this singular man. Full of this terrible idea, she drew the old lady more closely to her side, as if prepared to defend her with all her feeble force, and finding the venerable woman, struck probably with the same gloomy forebodings, trembled violently, she said firmly. “ Fear nothing,

Dame Margaret, I will not be parted from you, we will die together."

"Her life will be safe," the pirate said, replying to her speech, "provided she is as obstinately silent on my secret, as she has proved herself with regard to your name; but there seems small chance of your quitting us yet, fair maiden; and I trust our poor attempts to render your abode tolerable, have not entirely failed—you have learned too, that with me you have nothing to fear; meanwhile if it pleases you to address a scroll to him you say claims you as his affianced bride, doubt not I will have it conveyed to his hand. Fear not while you sojourn in this island, to take the air, when you are so disposed; here I am a despotic prince, and my subjects know too well the penalty of disobedience." He sounded a silver call, and, apparently from the outside, the same man, who had conducted them thither, now made his appearance.

“Kirk,” he said addressing the worthy satellite. “Attend this lady to her apartment, and see that my orders respecting her are punctually obeyed,” then bowing with courtly grace to the fair girl, he stood watching her retreating figure as she traversed the long chamber, apparently unwilling to lose the view of so much loveliness.

CHAPTER VI.

IN drawing the character of our hero, we seek not to lay before the reader, one which never existed save in the imagination of the novelist, that of a young man just entering into life, yet gifted with a stock of superhuman goodness, and a prudence which enables him to steer clear of all those rocks and quicksands, which too often interrupt the course of the young and inexperienced. We have rather to do with one, who possessing many noble and generous

feelings, was but too apt to yield to the impetuosity which frequently attends them.

Truth then compels us to declare that, although in the first instance Harry Knox was struck with horror at the idea, of being even the involuntary companion of pirates, yet by insensible degrees that horror wore away, and in its place there arose, first pity for men thus cut off from society, and next an admiration of the bold and lawless deeds, which formed the theme of conversation around the jovial board, or more frequently beside the watch fire; coloured with the tints of youthful impetuosity, the picture they would give of the pursuit and capture of a prize, lost every harsh and repulsive feature, while the murder and pillage of so many fellow creatures were set down as the natural consequences, resulting from a daring resistance of higher powers. Thus by degrees even his own unjust seizure was viewed with

less emotion, until it came at last to be regarded as the common fate of war.

Will it be objected that this change of feeling appears unnatural? I may appeal to those deepest read in that perplexing volume the human heart; and such I feel convinced will bear ample testimony to the feeble barrier, which even the best of dispositions and the firmest of human resolves, can oppose to the torrent, which is perpetually seeking to burst the boundaries, that religion and the laws of society set to the passions of men. In early youth the precept and the line must indeed be repeated many times, before they can be expected to make the desired impression, and even then the finger which engraved the flinty tables, must complete its divine work before that impression can be stamped with efficacy in the heart.

Surely then none can marvel that a youth,

who from a very early age, separated from all that might be expected to use these unwearied efforts for his welfare, should, for a time at least, yield to the debasing influence of his companions, ever ready with a jest to meet the scruples he felt at their lawless trade, and exerting every art to win him over to their side. And there was one, who hailed with evident delight, the change which was passing over Harry Knox ; this was the pirate captain, whom we have already represented, as powerfully interested in his young captive, but whether from motives of good or evil towards him, was a point which probably he himself had not yet determined. Emotions of a mingled nature, never failed to agitate this singular man's brow, when the young sailor was brought before him ; the striking resemblance he bore to one, who had received at the pirate's hands deadly wrong, one moment urged him to repair as far as in him lay the injury he had done, by watching over

his living image, while the next he felt a fiendish satisfaction in the certainty of being at any moment able to crush one who reminded him too powerfully of his crime; not that he believed there existed any affinity between Harry Knox and his victim, the thought was too wild to be entertained for a moment, and yet it seemed that close relationship alone could account for the resemblance of form and feature. The pirate did all in his power to attach Harry Knox to himself, in which he was probably actuated by the conviction, that he should, hereafter, need a friend more to be depended on, than the two who so closely attended him.

It may readily be supposed, that the share of favor bestowed on this stranger, by their captain, did not contribute to raise him in the estimation of these two worthies; but they were restrained from any open display of their hostility, by the belief that the prisoner being of good family, the price of his freedom would

be proportionably high, thus avarice kept guard over their enmity; but while they behaved towards him with the outward shew of cordiality, each pleased himself with the resolve of future opportunity of revenge.

Meanwhile the object of their malevolence, far from entertaining a suspicion of the feelings cherished by his companions, became every day more attached to their society; bold and active, he delighted in the dangerous occupations which custom rendered familiar to the inhabitants of the island, and in the search after the wild fowl and their eggs, which formed a portion of their daily food, he shewed skill and courage beyond his companions. The wild and hazardous nature of the life, with which he had been so singularly cast, was well adapted to his natural inclination, and Harry Knox soon ceased to long for his native land, where he believed nothing existed for him. Another link was soon added to the chain, that

bound him to the island ; the romance thrown around the fair girl, who had been captured with him, brought its effect on his imagination ; he pleased himself with the belief, that his presence was in some degree necessary to her safety, and though prohibited with the rest, from approaching the spot where she walked daily, Harry was accustomed to watch with a beating heart for the flutter of her veil, and the light and pretty foot, which at the allotted hour, never failed to appear.

Things were in this state, when the arrival of a small vessel off the island gave a new current to affairs. Those who landed from it, were apparently engaged in the profession of smuggling, as they brought on shore many articles which were prohibited from entering the ports ; besides these, they were evidently freighted with important news, and by the captain's anxious brow, it might be inferred that the safety of the community, was in some

measure involved in it. Apparently, the master of the newly arrived vessel was urging the pirate to some undertaking he shrank from ; many and deep were the consultations they held, and to one of these, Harry Knox became an involuntary, though not an uninterested auditor.

He had strayed towards the hermitage, when the appearance of the pirate and the master caused him to draw back, lest his being on the spot, might be construed into a wish on his part to overhear a conversation intended to be private. The pirate and his companion passed on unconscious of his presence, and at length stopped close to the stone, behind which Harry Knox had withdrawn.

“Still I cannot fathom your motive for keeping him with you,” was the first remark, he heard from the stranger.

“A whim,” the pirate returned carelessly, “to say the truth, I have long been looking

out for some smart lad, who will be more ready to come at my whistle, than Parson and Kirk always are. They understand their own consequence, and at times, seem inclined to assert it."

"Yet you are surely wrong to trust a stranger, and a raw boy to boot; have you no misgivings, that he may one day slip his collar and be off, without so much as God be wi' ye?"

"Leave me alone for that; I hold him fast; no egress from this island without my permission, unless, indeed, he could swim and dive like an otter; but the boy has no wish to quit; I have forged more than one chain since he was brought hither, and now body and soul he is mine; should our friends be true, there may be hot work, and you will find the lad worth a thousand tamed spirits; his life is one of constant excitement, and he perils it freely,

even to reach a paltry wild fowl, and when he shall have better game in view, trust me the falcon will soar high."

"Not higher than you can lure him back, I hope," the stranger said significantly, "he seems one more given to command, than to obey, and once he feels his pinions unfettered, credit me, he will little heed the whistle of those who slipped his jesses. But you spoke of some other prisoner, a lady."

"One," the pirate answered, "I trust to make worth her weight in gold, if I can hit upon any plan for getting her in safety to her friends; but the little jade obstinately refuses to tell her name, and only prays to be sent to the English court. Were she content to return to Scotland, whence she came, it might be managed, but to thrust my head into the lion's den, were dangerous sport."

"Yet I mistake if you will not be obliged to run the risk; on your own account, not for

a mere woman. Why not let one of your trusty followers convey the little craft to England, that would be running no risk ? ”

“ Not as far as personal safety is concerned I grant, but you forget friend that there will be money in the case ; now, although I have the greatest confidence in the honesty of my brave fellows, while here, for the best possible reason, that there is nothing for them to rob me of ; still, when out of my sight and master of a treasure, I cannot answer that the mania for seeing this strange land we hear so much of might not seize my trusty messenger, and thus I should be at once minus money and servant. ”

The stranger laughed.

“ Well, well,” he said, “ you seem sorely at a loss what to do with your live fare ; for my part, I should dispose of them with much less ceremony. ”

“ How so ? ”

“ Why for the youngster, who I take it, will

one day serve you as the viper did the clown, I would make sure of him by two inches of cold steel; while for the lady, she should live as long as I found her tractable, and then a dive under water might bring her to reason. But, hark ye! if you wish to send her home, why not entrust her to me? I will convey her to England, or any where else she may choose, and no risk to any body; while for the money, you know me for a man of honour and your friend."

The pirate's look seemed to convey a slight doubt on the subject, but he hastened to do away the impression, which such a look might produce on his very good friend the smuggler.

"Doubt not," he said, "my entire confidence in your honesty and zeal; you have held to me through evil report, and if it should ever be my fate to be restored to my rank, you shall find how fully I know your worth; but for this girl, I know not how it is, I would fain

keep her here a little longer, something in her noble bearing pleases me."

"Enough said," interrupted the stranger, "I mean not to spoil sport; you spoke but now of purchase money to be given for the little craft, and now I find you have other payment in view; well, well, you know best what such gear has cost already."

"You mistake me, friend," the pirate replied gravely, "I praise the girl for her noble spirit; how many of her sex in such a situation, would weary me with tears and lamentations, while she bears herself as one who, conscious of no evil, fears it not from others. I could not harm her, were it only for the frank confidence she reposes in me; credit me, the girl is right noble."

The smuggler cast on the speaker a look of surprise, not altogether unmixed with contempt; but he was too good a politician to utter his sentiments, and changing the conver-

sation, reverted to some topic they had been discussing in the hermitage.

“You are determined then” he said, “not to go with me this trip?”

“No,” was the reply, “the time is not yet come; too hasty a step on my side, would mar a plot which promises fairly.”

“Yet I think something more might be done if you were on the spot,” the other urged, “and you would run less risk than you fancy, since it is believed, in England, you perished in the ship that went down, when the chase was so hot; if your enemies had not thought so, they would have hunted you from your hiding place long ago.”

“Nay,” the pirate rejoined, “you wrong me much if you suppose that fear has to do with my absence from a council, met to deliberate on that which, if accomplished, will again place me on a level with princes; could

the sacrifice of my poor life atone for the wrongs of a much injured woman, I would gladly brave the danger you believe I shrink from; but Elizabeth has the eyes of Argus ever on the watch; still had you brought one line from the priest, even now I would have gone with you without scruple."

"He is a cautious dog!" the other answered, "I urged him to write, but he said, 'black and white have brought many an honest man to the block, word of mouth is best, my son, but before long I hope our hands will be at liberty as well as our tongues.'"

"Marry, Amen!" the pirate rejoined, rising from the ground, "the plan promises fairly, and heaven prosper it: commend me to the holy father, and tell him I wait but his orders; if he think, my presence will further his schemes, I am ready to appear either singly or at the head of my crew." He turned off

as he spoke, leaving his companion still standing on the spot; the latter gazed after the pirate's retreating figure a few moments, and then broke into a scornful laugh.

“Cowardly fool!” he said “it would be long before you risked your precious neck in any contest, save with an inferior enemy. The reverend father remembers you as you were, active and daring; times are changed since those days, and as conscience makes us all cowards, ’tis no wonder you are turned dastard—what hinders me giving you up to the fate you deserve?—the fear that you would spoil our well laid plot; your head is worth its weight in gold ’tis true, but as I am not the vile thing you believe me, there is something that goes one degree beyond gold in my esteem; yet ’tis well to have two anchors to depend on; should the holy father’s plot fail, why then the price of a traitor’s head may not be amiss’”

So saying the smuggler retraced his steps towards the hermitage, leaving Harry Knox more than ever bewildered respecting the strange being into whose hands he had fallen.

CHAPTER VII.

MONTHS rolled away and brought little variety to our hero, save that each day seemed to strengthen the tie, which was forming between him and his captor ; indeed, it would have been extraordinary had his warm and enthusiastic nature remained untouched by the various kindnesses and modes of fascination adopted by this man to gain him. Now a wild and daring leader of pirates, and anon the elegant and refined courtier, he was the person most fitted in

the world, to lead captive the bold, romantic youth thus thrown in his power; he saw the full extent of the advantage he possessed, and prepared to mould the plastic clay with a masterly hand.

Sometimes amid the wild and savage scenery of the island, while walking by the foaming ocean, that view which, perhaps of all that nature furnishes, is best adapted to arouse in our bosom all those thoughts of a boundless liberty, which man for ever pants after, the pirate would recount some deed of high and successful enterprise, which, clad in the winning garb of refined language, and told by one who knew best how to adapt his speech to the taste of him who listened, carefully veiling aught that might remind his auditor, that those noble feats were performed in a bad cause, would make his heart palpitate to be a sharer in such bold daring. Then the wily tempter would change the scene, and beneath the brilliant moonbeam,

at that witching hour, when the coldest heart feels the power of the holy calm, which pervades earth and air, the pirate would throw aside all that before was most admirable in the hero, and assuming the softness love is wont to inspire, dwell with touching pathos on the charms and virtues of her, who had formed such a prominent feature in his eventful life ; now he represented her the leading star amid an admiring court ; then, when his youthful auditor was prepared to bow the knee to this worshipped idol, he suddenly reversed the picture, and depicted her alone, friendless, and oppressed, in the power of an envious rival, till, with every feeling wrought to the highest pitch, Harry Knox would start forward as the champion who should stand forth alone opposed to all the world, and effect her liberation. Then it was that the pirate would shake his head with a mournful smile ; and while his words were calculated to impress on the youth's mind a

conviction, that no assistance might avail, an unguarded expression was allowed to escape, which conveyed the blissful idea that something might yet be attempted, and that he himself should be assigned a conspicuous place in the glorious enterprise.

Since the pirate's interview with the smuggler, however, his manner had undergone a considerable change ; he became restless, agitated, and irritable ; shunning all intercourse with his followers ; even his young proselyte was neglected, and he passed the greater portion of his time in solitary rambles, evidently a prey to anxious suspense ; and Harry Knox was induced to suppose that the smuggler's return was the engrossing subject of his thoughts. The conversation to which he had unintentionally become privy, and still more the soliloquy in which the smuggler had indulged, raised a suspicion in the mind of the young sailor, that he was far from being the staunch friend, the pirate be-

lieved him; yet, how to put the latter on his guard, without revealing what he had heard, and thereby exhibiting himself in the odious character of a spy, a character which the young and generous heart shrinks from most sensitively. Again, more might have been said, before he became a party to their conversation, than it might suit those between whom it passed, should be known; and Harry was too well aware of the lawless character he had to deal with, to suppose that either of them would scruple at putting out of the way, one who had learned too many secrets of the prison-house. Upon the whole then, he concluded it the safer plan to watch, so far as he was able, the smuggler's conduct, should he again land on the island, rather than jeopardy his own life, by hinting at treachery, he had no power to substantiate. But while anxious concerning the fate of one, he had learned to regard with but too great a predilection, Harry Knox was sud-

denly compelled to leave caring for the safety of his captain, and take heed of his own.

The fits of abstraction and wandering, in which, as we before observed, the pirate sometimes indulged, had of late become more frequent and lengthened, and the fears of Harry Knox were aroused, when after a lapse of several days, no tidings were heard of the wanderer ; and as the youth had observed that, at the time of his departure, the pirate seemed labouring under a more than usual depression of spirits, he was naturally led to believe, that, overcome by the pressure of feeling, the unhappy man had, in a moment of frenzy, given way to the suggestions of the tempter, ever on the watch for seasons when the mind sinks beneath its oppressive burden, and whispering that a noble daring will at once rid the sufferer of his ills, and usher him to regions of peace and tranquillity.

There was no one to whom Harry could

communicate his fearful surmises, for of the train who appeared more peculiarly to enter into all that concerned their leader, and to watch more immediately over him, one, who was called Parson, and who stood high in Harry's esteem, from his light and jovial temperament, had left with the smuggler on some secret mission, while the other whose saturnine look and manner had always sent a chill to the young sailor's heart, was to all appearance, too much engrossed with the duties which devolved on him during his master's absence, to hear any thing which he might say. This man was now observed to withdraw himself entirely from the society of the pirates, but this might arise from the difficulty he found in enforcing the necessary degree of subordination among those who were permitted to treat him as a comrade. Still Harry Knox had found himself from time to time watching this dark man with a degree of solicitude, for which he

could give no definite reason, since the nature of his occupation gave no cause for suspicion ; he appeared to have suddenly acquired an inclination for study, since at every moment he could steal from his duty, Kirk might be seen seated on a projecting rock, which at once commanded a view of the old castle, and the usual approach to the island. At the hour allotted for the young Scottish lady's walk, the form of Kirk was sure to be seen immovable, as the rock on which he sat. His eyes fixed on what, in those days, was an unwonted companion to one in his station, viz. a black lettered volume, and his Scottish bonnet pulled over his dark and lowering brow, in such a manner as to shade his countenance.

The portion of ground to which the fair captive confined her walk, did not approach very near to the seat occupied by Kirk ; but as from day to day she beheld this singular figure, on the same spot, and precisely in the same

position, curiosity, that baneful ingredient in woman's composition, urged her approach, to ascertain whether it was indeed a creature of flesh and blood, or merely a part of the rock, which bearing the outline of the human form, distance and fancy had concurred to render the delusion perfect. Still a fear of transgressing the limits of her walk, beyond which the pirate had warned her he could not answer for her safety, joined to the entreaties of Dame Margaret, that she would take heed to her ways, and not run into danger, kept her from fully satisfying the intense anxiety she felt concerning this phenomenon.

Imperceptibly the space that divided the fair maiden from the object of her curiosity diminished every walk she took, while each day her powers of persuasion were employed to induce the good old lady to stray a little, a very little more, beyond the boundary.

The lengthened absence of the pirate, as we

before observed, had alarmed the fears of Harry Knox, and he had hastened down to the beach to watch for the re-appearance of the wanderer.

The day was cold, and a piercing wind brought with it a sleet, which considerably annoyed the self constituted sentinel, though anxiety respecting the safety of his friend enabled him to retain his post. Towards evening the air became milder, and the brilliant Aurora Borealis enlivened a scene, which a few hours before had been so dreary. Wearied by an unsuccessful watch, Harry Knox turned his steps towards the castle, and advancing within a few yards of Kirk's favourite resting place, he marked with surprise, that he was at his post, even at that unwonted hour; not, as usual, absorbed in study, but watching with keen anxiety some object in or near the castle. Naturally induced to direct his eyes towards the same spot, Harry could observe the figure

of the Scottish maiden, and her constant attendant, slowly advancing towards the rock.

To account for their being abroad at this unusual hour we must repeat, that the day had been cold and damp, offering little to tempt the prisoners from their apartment, where a blazing fire in some degree compensated for the cheerless prospect without. Deprived of its wonted employment, the active mind of the young lady became weary of confinement, and as is ever the case, when we are debarred any fancied enjoyment, fresh air at the moment seemed to her essential to very existence. Full of this intense feeling, she hailed with delight the appearance of more auspicious weather, and bounding from the gothic window from which she had been watching the drifting clouds, she said:

“Come, dame Margery, don your braw plaidie, and let us forth for a wee bit.”

The old lady answered with the tantalising

caution of age "That can hardly be, for see, child, how it has rained a' the day, and the earth maun be damp, so sit you down and sing me ane of your blithsome tunes till Janet comes with the refection."

"Yet come, dear Margery," the maiden coaxingly persisted, "I am weary to death at being cooped up in this odious cage, all the day long; and now it is so fine, and as I live, there are the merry northern lights come to gladden my heart! Come, dear Margery, if you love me, only over the threshold, that I may look at their merry dance, and think of the time when I watched them in my own bonnie Scotland."

This appeal, coupled with the name dearest to her heart, and accompanied by the expression of that dark eye, overcame Dame Margaret's sager reason, and rising from her chair, she first almost exhausted her young favourite's patience by the anxious care with which she

insisted on one article of clothing after another being put on ; then, after some further time spent in arranging her own ample drapery, she permitted herself to be led forth into the open air.

“ Now confess, Dame Margery,” the maiden said playfully, addressing her companion who, struck with the beauty of the sky, had ceased the various ejaculatory grumblings in which she had indulged as she left the blazing hearth.

“ Confess this is much better than sitting in yon gloomy chamber, where, spite of the comfortable fire, the wind whistles round our heads ; and then it is so dark and dismal, that even I, who used to be merry as the mavis, feel as if I could mope and cry all day long ; but when I think of you, my kind Margery, I try to shake it off, for should I pine and grow sick, who will take care of you ?”

“ Blessings on your tender heart ?” the dame replied, “ you are ever forgetting your own

sorrows to sooth those of others. May my old e'en not close before you are safe out of this foul cage. God's will be done! but it goes nigh to kill me, when I think that my sweet bird is shut up in it."

"But not for long, dame," she said assuming an appearance of hope she was far from feeling, "you know the pirate took my letter, and promised to bring me a speedy answer; doubtless he has gone with it himself, for I have missed him of late; we should not complain, for he is kind and good to us; and even in my guardian's house, I was not more unmolested. Unhappy and unfortunate he may be, but he is not a bad man."

The old woman shook her head as she listened to the animated girl's defence of one she considered the cause of their misfortunes.

"Nay, my dear young lady, but he is a bold, bad man; for did he not seize on those who were going on their own way—did he not rob

and murder those who withstood his wicked violence? Were the man as ugly as his deeds, you would not deny that he is a bad man."

The maiden blushed at the rebuke, though unintentional, conveyed in these words, and willing to give a turn to the conversation, which came somewhat too near her conscience, suddenly exclaimed,—“Look, dame Margery! yonder is that figure on the rock, can it indeed be only a statue.”

“My old e'en cannot see clearly,” the old lady replied a little peevishly, “but what does it matter? You seem very curious about this figure, child.”

“Nay, do not chide me, dear Margery,” and as she spoke tears sprang to the fair girl's eyes, “anything that occupies my thoughts, even for a moment, is welcome in this wilderness, where the time passes so heavily; you feel not as I do, dame Margaret, the loss of all our wonted tasks, when the day was too short for the vari-

ous duties it brought with it ; would that a few of them were still mine, though it might be only those, which in my girlish waywardness I sometimes repined at !”

The old woman laid her trembling hand on her young companion’s arm, as she said “ I am old and feeble, and rest and quiet best suit these limbs, that were once as active as your own. Yet think not, my child, I am without regret ; but it is for you I feel it, to see you thus torn from all you love ; yet let it be your consolation, maiden, that there is an eye still watching over you, and a hand which can at any moment snatch you from all danger.”

“ I know it, dear Margery, and I should be most ungrateful did I not feel how much worse my fate might have been. May the father of the fatherless still protect me ! and then I am safe even in a den of robbers.”

During this conversation, the steps of the speakers drew nearer to the object of curiosity ;

and with that happy facility, with which the youthful mind turns from subject to subject, the Scottish maiden was soon wholly absorbed in its contemplation. One moment she felt assured that what she gazed on was a living creature, and the next, she was as fully convinced that it was but the semblance of a man, artfully moulded from the solid rock.

Just as the debate in her mind was at the highest, dame Margery declared herself tired, and observing it was late, proposed returning to their apartment.

“ One moment longer,” said her companion eagerly, “ all is so still, and we have not seen a single being. No doubt the pirates are away to the village, where Janet says they sometimes spend the evening ; so there can be no danger, dame Margaret ; and before I go home I must discover what it is on the rock. Just now I thought it moved, but I believe my eyes were dazzled by a northern flash ; you are tired, dear

Margery, so sit you down, and I will go but one foot nearer ; then I shall be quite convinced ; perhaps I may not have such another opportunity."

With affectionate care she seated the old lady, who, however, vehemently opposed her going, until shortness of breath, and the repeated assurances of her charge, that she would not quit her sight, cut short further contention, and dreading no danger, the beautiful girl bounded like a fawn towards the dwarfic stone. Nearer and nearer she came, as the moth may be seen to approach the flame, which beguiles it, and equally unconscious of ill. She paused at some few paces distant, attentively studying the singular stone, for such she felt convinced it must be, seeing it stirred not ; then turning round, to ascertain how far she was removed from her protectress, a few steps more and she should be close to the object which had so long tantalised her. The die was cast, she almost touched the

rock, when with one bound the figure she had so securely contemplated stood beside her.

We have said that the Scottish maiden was courageous by nature, yet we dare not assert, that this sudden movement on the part of what she had been regarding as a mass of inanimate matter, did not produce some derangement in her naturally firm nerves. One fearful cry burst from her, and then she stood rooted to the spot she would have given worlds to fly from. As that shriek burst upon her ear, dame Margery sprang from her seat, conscious that danger or agony of no common nature must threaten her young friend, to wring from her such a fearful sound. Forgetful alike of the weariness that oppressed her, and the feebleness of coming age, the faithful creature thought only of her charge, and bitterly lamenting the permission so reluctantly given, she came to the relief of the child of her love with more speed than could have been looked

for; but the succour she could have brought would have availed little; the ruffian's arm was already round his victim, and lifting her from the ground, he was about bearing her to the hermitage, where he intended to keep her in security, until an opportunity might offer to remove her from the island; or should the captain return before that could be effected, his own escape would save him from the chastisement he could not fail to meet, as the due reward of his brute violence.

“Lovely lady” he began, in as bland a tone as his naturally harsh voice could be brought to assume, and hoping to sooth his struggling captive, for at his touch the bonds of fear were burst, and the terrified girl exerted her feeble strength to shake off his iron grasp. As the word passed his lips, a powerful hand was on him, and turning to see who had thus arrested his progress, the pirate stood confronted by Harry Knox.

“Villain and robber,” the youth exclaimed indignantly, and shaking Kirk with a violence which at a moment of less excitement he could not have exerted, “unhand the lady, or by Heaven I will make mince meat of the fingers you have so daringly laid upon her.”

Giddy with surprise and the concussion caused by being so handled, Kirk did as he was commanded, and released his prey, but it was only to grapple furiously with his young assailant; at this moment another actor was added to the scene of strife, who made up by stratagem, what she wanted in strength. Seeing their champion about to be worsted in the encounter with one more powerful than himself, dame Margaret drew near the combatants, and taking advantage of the pirate's bending his head, as he strove to bear his opponent to the earth, she dexterously contrived to send the contents of a well filled Scottish mull, which she had drawn from her pocket, into his

face. Who might endure the cruel torture of those subtle particles piercing the eyes? In an agony too great for endurance, the villain quitted his hold, that his hands might be at liberty to administer relief to his suffering eyes; but every effort made to this end only served to encrease the pain, by driving the offending dust further in.

Fearful that the sufferer's cries would reach the ears of some of his comrades, who would not fail to take ample vengeance for the injury done to this man, Harry Knox was desirous to convey the trembling girl from the spot. As he was about to offer her the assistance of his arm for this purpose, a peculiar whistle was heard; agonized as he still was, Kirk caught the well known signal of his captain, and fully aware of the fate which awaited him, when his daring villany should be known, he growled out one bitter oath of hatred and revenge, then darting away, guided by instinct, in default of sight, was soon lost among the rocks.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE captain's surprise was great, when he beheld the group, and there was a considerable degree of displeasure mingled with the courtesy, with which he doffed his bonnet to the Scottish maiden.

“It is somewhat late, lady,” he said, “for one of your age and sex to be so far from home ; and you may thank your good fortune, rather than the prudence of those entrusted with you, if you have come thus far at such an hour un-

molested. But how is this ?” he added, as he marked the agitation which shook her frame. “ You tremble and seem alarmed ; sure no one has dared in my absence to forget the respect due to your unprotected situation,”

He turned fiercely to the young sailor, as he spoke, and his hand mechanically grasped his dirk.”

“ Your suspicions are well founded,” the youth replied coolly, “ but as far as they point to myself, know me Sir, Knight, incapable as you are of taking advantage of a lady’s unprotected state. I have been fortunate enough to rescue your fair captive, from the hands of one of your own people, and since she is now under the protection of one, whose duty, as I believe it is his pleasure, to watch over her safety, I will take my leave.”

“ Your pardon, fair sir,” the pirate rejoined, placing himself before Harry Knox, “ but you must not quit us until I have more fully learned

the service this lady has received at your hands ; if it is as you say, my thanks are due to you, for having in my absence, fulfilled the duty I have somewhat neglected, that of watching over one, whose safety is of great moment. But should I find you palter with me, by seeking to charge another with your own villany, by the heaven above us, you shall not escape me."

"Nay, never look on him so fiercely, sir robber," Dame Margaret said, interposing, "ye maunna think ill of the braw callant that saved my sweet lammie fra' the wolf."

"And hōw comes it, dame," the pirate rejoined, turning his stern look on the old lady, "how comes it, that you have so little regarded the safety of your young mistress, and my commands, as to suffer her to come so far beyond the limits, I put to your walks ? one of your age and experience should better have known the danger of such a risk."

“The blame is all my own,” the maiden said, coming forward, with as much firmness as she could command.

“And what urged you to such folly, lady?” the pirate demanded, his brow unbending, as he gazed on the beautiful and ingenuous countenance, which was lifted to his face, full of anxiety to exculpate others, and take upon herself the consequences of her fault, “were you one of those giddy maidens, whose heels seem made of quicksilver, ever impelling them to stray upon forbidden ground, it would not surprise me to find you thus wandering; but I have ever believed you above the foibles of your sex.”

“Yet, a foolish curiosity alone impelled me to transgress your commands,” she replied blushing.

“Curiosity!” the pirate repeated with bitter irony, “are you too possessed by that false fiend, which has lured so many of your sex to

destruction both here and hereafter? what lost to man the paradise we are told was once his inheritance? was it not that evil spirit, prefigured by a wily snake—curiosity?”

“Your reproof is just,” the maiden replied somewhat proudly. “Yet the poor captive may be pardoned, who risks, from the indulgence of this womanish propensity, not paradise but a prison, if she forgets for a moment the awful consequences which resulted from this besetting sin of woman.”

“I have yet to learn, fair Eve, what fruit was found in these wild regions, so tempting in look or taste, that it could induce you to run into danger in its pursuit.”

The Scottish maiden briefly recounted the effect which had been produced on her mind, by the singular appearance of the figure on the rock, and also the termination of her attempt to ascertain, whether it was indeed a human being, or only the semblance of one. The

pirate's brow again grew black, as he listened to her story, and turning to the young sailor, who was deeply engaged in the study of the fair narrator's eloquent face, he abruptly demanded, "which of my people has thus dared to disobey me?"

"Kirk, as I think," was the reply; "he has the strength of a lion, and without the assistance of this good old dame, my battle with him might have terminated differently."

"And how could you bear a part in the fray, old goody?" the pirate asked with a laugh.

"By throwing a wee sneeshin int' his e'en," Margery said. "Ye ken he could na' stand that."

"Not the first man, by thousands, who has been blinded by the dust cast into his eyes, by a fair lady. The villain has paid but a slight penalty for his daring; but, if I live, he shall feel in every limb what it is to trifle with the commands of his superior. But come, fair lady,

the cold night wind is no lullaby for such as you ; permit that I lead you to your apartment, where, for one night longer, you must repose ; to-morrow it shall be my care to place you in a more comfortable dwelling, where you shall have a stronger and more watchful guardian than dame Margaret has shown herself, though perhaps not more ready at a *pinch*. Necessity may compel me to be absent from the island for a few weeks, and when I come back, doubt not your restoration to your friends, with whom I hope to find in you a powerful advocate.”

So saying, he took her hand, and followed by dame Margaret, sadly crest fallen at the implied doubt of her care and discretion, a doubt for which her conscience whispered there was much apparent cause, they regained the ruinous archway which led to the fair prisoner’s apartment. After seeing his charge safely lodged, the pirate returned in search of Harry Knox, whom he found on the same spot

where he had left him. The pirate approached the youth with all a sailor's frankness, and, holding out his hand, said.

“We must be friends—forgive the momentary thought that wronged you, and let the confidence I am about to place, bear ample testimony to the high opinion I have of you.” Harry took the proffered hand with the same cordiality with which it was offered; his heart beat violently, for he believed the moment had at length arrived, when he was to stand forth the champion of a wronged and lovely woman. In the excitement of his feelings, the service he had just rendered, of which a few moments before he felt justly proud, shrunk into comparative insignificance, while the beauty of the fair Scottish girl, which he felt assured as he gazed on her surpassed that of all her sex, was suddenly lost in the fuller blaze of charms which he believed decked her rival. A fervent grasp of the pirate's hand, told what was pass-

ing in his mind ; the wily tempter was satisfied his young victim was in a fit state to second all his daring plans, and taking Harry Knox by the arm, he led him towards the hermitage. Having first obtained a light, the pirate proceeded to search every hole and corner of the cell, which might afford a lurking place for a mouse ; then placing the flambeau in a rude sconce attached to the wall, he threw himself on the stone couch, motioning the other to sit beside him.

“Are you willing,” he said abruptly, fixing his keen dark eye on the young sailor, “are you willing to follow the fortunes of a desperate and an outlawed man, one against whom every hand is raised, and whose name is lisped forth loaded with curses even by very babes?”

“I will never desert you,” Harry answered, “though, as I am ignorant of your history, it is impossible for me to judge how far you deserve the hatred with which you tell me you are

pursued.—I have had kindness at your hands, and in return I will follow wherever you shall lead.”

“You will not regret your resolution young man,” the pirate rejoined, for a moment touched with the generous self devotion of his companion, “The stake I play for is high, and those who would win such a one, must risk something in return. I do not then hide from you, that our undertaking is a perilous one; but where is the pearl of price to be found without danger, or where is the bold mariner who would wish to sail for ever on a calm sea? The time is come when you must be fully instructed both in my past life, and my present views.

“The few months you have passed with us have, I hope, sufficed to convince you, that I was not born one of the class you find me associating with. My father was a Scottish noble, exiled for some offence, real or imaginary,

against the then existing government ; thus I passed the earliest and best of my days, an alien from my country, and as my subsequent history will too plainly testify, among those ill calculated to guide the headstrong, fiery youth, who saw no merit equal to that of revenge, taken on his enemies, for the wrongs they had done him and his. Thus the demon of hatred was fostered in my bosom, and when after the death of my father I returned to my native land, it was with the firm resolve of climbing to the height of power, that I might set my foot on the necks of those by whose means we had been banished. Time would fail, to tell of all the feuds I engaged in at that turbulent court ; now successful, and glorying in that success ; anon, forced to fly before one more powerful again I became an exile. At length on my second return to Scotland, some service, I was fortunate enough to render my sovereign, secured me all the favor I could desire, and in

a little time I became the favourite of royalty, and of course, the hatred of the court. To what pitch of power my mad ambition aspired, would be bootless for me to repeat, suffice it to say, obstacles, apparently insurmountable, melted before me, like an icicle kissed by the sun-beam, and I obtained my every wish. But, how short lived is human power or happiness! Scarcely was I raised to this envied height, when those who had been most forward to assist in my ascent, were equally active in effecting my downfall. Crimes which they themselves had planned, or assisted me to commit in my onward progress, were now charged upon me with all the exaggeration malice could suggest, and such a storm was raised that I was once more constrained to fly.

Enraged at my escape, some among the most active of my enemies undertook to pursue and bring me back to Scotland, dead or alive. The vessel in which I embarked was overtaken,

and a desperate conflict ensued, which lasted till night, when, finding our situation hopeless, I, together with those two men, Parson and Kirk, contrived to escape by means of the boat, and the vessel soon after going down, it was naturally supposed I perished with the rest of the crew. Thus I have been permitted to remain unmolested in this retreat, and few are aware that the northern pirates, as we are called, are headed by a Scottish noble. Yet, I am not without friends, aye, and staunch ones too, who are even now working to restore me to the inheritance of my fathers.—I ask not their aid for myself, but for one I loved in the days of prosperity, and who, is now like myself in exile and distress. Her condition is even worse than mine, since enraged at her obstinate adherence to a ruined man, her pretended friends have shut her up in a prison, where she suffers all the hardships and insults petty malice can devise. I will dare all to free her from

their power ; and the spies I have sent to hover about her residence, and convey me intelligence of what passes, have made me acquainted with a movement among those who have her in custody, which promises fairly. Mean time, I must repair to London, a step fraught with danger, for many there may recognise me, and instant death will be the consequence of my detection. One trusty follower will be necessary, and my hope rests on you, since Kirk, whom I always believed firm as the rock he has so successfully imitated, will scarcely venture to face me after his late outrage. To-morrow, we will search for him, and if found, a dungeon shall be his portion during my absence. Parson is already in England, and as I hear, doing wonders for us.—Will you then swear to be true to my cause—or rather that of a wronged and unhappy woman, whose redress is the duty of every true son of chivalry.

“ You forget,” the youth answered sadly, “ that I am no belted Knight.”

“ Yet, you shall be one,” the pirate quickly rejoined, “ be but faithful and my own sword shall convey the distinction upon you, while princes shall stand by, and aid in recompensing one who has done such good service ; say then that you will not betray a noble cause.”

“ Why should I betray you ? or where shall I find another friend ? earth holds none of my blood—my life is a worthless one, but such as it is I freely peril it in the cause of the lady you say needs aid ; and I pledge myself hand and heart to succour and defend her, even to the death.”

“ Swear to be true, and to obey my commands,” the pirate said in a tone of triumph, and drawing, as he spoke, a dagger from his bosom, the handle of which formed a cross, and holding it towards his companion, “ swear,” he said, “ on this symbol of man’s redemption,

never to betray the trust I repose in you, or by word or deed to discover aught connected with me, or those with whom I am leagued."

Harry Knox readily took the prescribed oath, and the pirate continued,—“ I have told you that many among those with whom I am about to mix are well acquainted with me, it is therefore necessary I should assume a disguise to blind the Argus eyes which will be on me—you, too, must take heed you are not recognised."

“ There are few in England,” the young sailor answered, “ to whom I am known, and they will be easily avoided, seeing their rank and my own are so widely different :—one thing I must know, the name of him I am now bound to serve."

The pirate mused.

“ Call me Crichton,” he said, at length, “ that will be enough to satisfy those who may enquire the title of your new master. But the

night wears apace, and you need repose before to-morrow, for then we must begin our perilous journey. I too have undergone much fatigue since we parted, and the body will claim its rest, though the mind would at times willingly deny its claim. Come with me : Parson's couch is empty, and as it is near my own you shall take possession of it ; henceforth I will have no guard but you, and we will rise or fall together."

We will not say that our hero's slumbers were that night undisturbed. A vague sense of the danger, to which he had exposed himself by thus embarking in a hazardous enterprise, the nature of which he was in a great degree ignorant, for some time prevented his sleeping ; but with the sophistical reasoning of headstrong youth, he quieted the alarm his conscience gave him on this account by urging in reply to its suggestions, that in this instance at least the end would sanctify the means, since the defence of an

oppressed woman must claim the right hand of every man of noble feeling.

Full of these reflections, he fell asleep, and then fancy being allowed to range at will, conjured up scenes of high achievement, and their well merited rewards. He it was, who led on a brave band to storm the grim fortress, where the lovely lady was immured—his single arm mowed down opposing warriors, with as much ease, as the mischievous urchin deprives some tall poppies of their flowery crowns. And, when victor in the strife, he bent the knee, as belted knight, before her whom his prowess had set free, his heart beat high, at beholding the golden wreath with which the fair hand was about to deck his brow. He raised his eyes to the face he fancied bending over him,—it had changed, and he beheld that of the Scottish maiden; a feeling of disappointment thrilled his heart, and then, with the fickle changing of the brain in sleep, the whole

scene vanished, and in the place of gorgeous pomp and dazzling beauty, a waste and dreary plain was before him ; here he fancied himself a solitary wanderer, flying from pursuit ; anon he was overtaken, captured, fettered, and cast into a dungeon, with the certainty, that the executioner awaited his coming forth to perform his horrid office, as an expiation for some unknown crime. From such troubled visions it was a relief to awake, and Harry Knox sprang up with alacrity, as the pirate's voice sounded in his ear.

Crichton's first care was to make every possible arrangement for the safety and comfort of his fair prisoner ; that accomplished, he set on foot a strict search after Kirk, but as may be imagined this was unavailing. He next called together his band, briefly informed them he was obliged to quit the island for a short period, exhorted them to good conduct during his absence, and bade them hold themselves in

readiness to join in an expedition that promised abundance of booty. After this, he returned to the castle, where he found the Scottish maiden, to whom he had previously sent notice of her removal to the village, waiting his arrival with her two attendants. She returned the pirate's greeting in silence; her cheek was deadly pale, and it was evident that the late alarm had robbed her of that confidence and security she had felt for some time.

Crichton was sensible of the change, and taking her hand with deep respect, he said "Fear nothing, gentle lady, those with whom I am about to place you, are worthy such high trust; your sojourn with them will be short, since my return is to be the signal for your quitting the pirate's island."

"The thanks of a desolate maiden are yours, sir stranger; and should it ever be my lot to meet again those friends who are interested in the safety of an unhappy orphan, my gratitude

for the honourable treatment I have met with from you, shall be shown otherwise than by words. But if your absence is caused by any negotiation you may have entered into regarding my ransom, would not a word written by my hand save much trouble."

"I am uncertain," the pirate replied, "to which country I must direct my steps, at this time—My absence will be short, and at my return, every necessary arrangement shall be made."

The Scottish maiden marked the slight embarrassment which her simple question caused the pirate, and hope was quenched in her bosom. "He but flatters me," she thought, "with the prospect of a liberty he has no intention I should taste." A shudder passed through her frame as she remembered she was in the power of a freebooter.

Though left under the protection of those well able to defend her, in case of need, and

whose rustic kindness was exerted in a thousand different ways, to sooth her captivity, the Scottish maiden saw Crichton depart, with deep regret; a feeling by no means lessened, when she found the gallant sailor who had rescued her from the grasp of Kirk was to accompany him.

CHAPTER IX.

LEAVING the winds and waves to dispose of those, who have hitherto formed a prominent feature in our history, we must beg to precede them, in order to introduce to the reader's notice, one or two other persons, who, for a time at least, may be essential to our story.

Passing then over a part of London as it stood "in the golden days of good Queen Bess," we will lead the way to an apartment belonging to one of the principal, among a

number of houses, which stood congregated together, as if chance, rather than design, had brought them to the same spot. The room into which we will suppose our reader has entered, under our pilotage, was what in fashionable language may be styled the library, containing a collection of books, the number of which, however, would scarcely quench the thirst for knowledge, in a literary young lady of the present day for a week ; besides these, the room contained pieces of armour, and some of the warlike weapons then in use. Two clumsy chairs and an unwieldy table completed the furniture. The former, standing opposite to each other, were empty, while the owner of the apartment, was slowly pacing up and down its narrow limits, in deep and anxious meditation. A letter was open in his hand, and it was reasonable to conclude, he was pondering over its contents.

He was a man in the prime of life, with no-

thing in his personal appearance, to distinguish him from the multitude ; the expression of his countenance was mild and benignant ; and there mingled with that expression, a considerable degree of sense and firmness, which might naturally lead the physiognomist to pronounce him one to plan decidedly and to execute promptly ; but who that deeply studies the human mind, as portrayed in the face, will form a final judgment by the expression of the eye alone ? that, like any index, may point out some striking passage, but it is to the mouth we must look for a faithful epitome of the whole volume. The first glance at this feature in the person before us, plainly indicated weakness and vacillation, an expression to which the scanty beard and whisker greatly added. His dress was that of a courtier in the train of the virgin queen, and chiefly remarkable for the high and solemn ruff, which surmounted it. His cap garnished with a band

of jewels, together with his george, lay on the table, on which stood a wax taper, such as are used by papists in their religious ceremonies, while near it was placed a beautiful alabaster crucifix, which seemed to bear ample testimony to the tenets of the nobleman, there present ; but these were only adopted for the time, and were laid aside when disappointed in the plots, which promised him an earthly diadem, he was taught to raise his hopes to a heavenly crown.

He was so wrapped in thought, as not to perceive the door open to admit the form of a small, dark man, who insinuating himself through the aperture, with the noiseless and stealthy foot of a cat, stood patiently awaiting the nobleman's attention to his coming. After a few minutes further abstraction, he raised his head, and as he did so a hasty "benedicite !" and the rapid sign of the cross, shewed the startling effect of the stranger's presence.

“ I trust my appearance does not incommode your Grace,” the latter said, and as he spoke a slight curl of his lip shewed the contempt he felt for one, who could thus betray emotion.

“ Not so, man,” his Grace answered. “ I have waited for you these two hours ; but by the blessed virgin, your step is so light that I marked not when you came in.”

“ A light foot and a firm hand, best befit the messenger of princes, since the stones must not always ‘ prate of our whereabouts’ as the rhyming fellow Will Shakespeare has it, or something like it. But what news has your Grace for me, since I see a scroll in your hand that promises some tidings.”

“ From our trusty friend of Ross,” the other replied, handing him the letter.

The small black eyes of the reader seemed to dart from their sockets, as he scanned the contents of the paper, the work of a moment ;

then folding it up, he returned the letter, saying. "This promises fairly, only let the good Bishop prove his boast is not an idle one, and our scheme will prove a right good one. But he speaks of sending a trusty messenger to your Grace, to confer with you, touching the succours he looks for from the north ; is the man arrived ?"

"Not yet, the letter came by the old hand."

"The Lord Bishop of Ross," the stranger continued, "is a right trusty son of Holy Mother Church, and one, I warrant, deeply skilled in the thoughts and intents of the heart ; yet he must beware with whom he intrusts our secret, seeing the queen of England has those in her pay, in every quarter of the globe, who can assume what guise they please, whereby to gain their ends ; such a one might deceive Beelzebub himself, and find means to frustrate his best laid plots."

"Nay, I fear nothing from any whom Ross

may see fit to confide in," the nobleman replied, "would that I felt the same reliance in those beyond sea, but methinks, our trusty ally, Alva, is somewhat tardy in his movements."

"He is the more sure," the stranger rejoined "would your Grace have him risk all for want of a little caution; doubt him not; as soon shall the sun forget to shine, as Alva shall forego his revenge. What! you forget the goodly coins which have lately been transferred to the coffers of the usurping bastard; a heavy reckoning she will be called on to make with the Duke."

"And when does Alva propose to act?"

"He waits but the signal I am to give him, when all is ripe for revolt in the heart of this kingdom; that moment Alva lands a chosen body of his Spanish veterans, our first care must be to make sure of the heretic woman, who has too long queened it over us. That

blow struck and all will go well; then shall our noble mistress possess her own again, and who but our lawful queen's husband, shall bear rule over merry England?"

The brow of the listener was flushed with gratified pride.

"Peace, Rodolphi!" he at last said, affecting a displeasure he was far from feeling, "all this is idle talk. God knows my heart; the compassion for an injured princess alone stirs me to this enterprise; nor do I wish to injure the royal Elizabeth, if I may by fair means win her consent to my union with the queen of Scotland; let her but restore that unhappy princess to liberty, and sanction our nuptials, and I will pledge my faith that she shall never more be molested by her Scottish neighbours."

The wily Italian saw he stood on dangerous ground, when the destruction of the English queen was hinted at; and inly despising the weakness which led his noble patron to let slip

the crown, which as queen Mary's husband he might possess, through a scruple that Rodolphi could neither appreciate, nor understand, he turned the conversation to the assistance he expected in their perilous scheme.

“Touching this trusty messenger the holy father mentions,” he said “how far is your Grace disposed to trust him?”

“Marry! that you yourself shall determine, Rodolphi; there is necessity for some one to pass between Alva and Mary Stuart; your absence from London at this time, would create suspicion, you tell me; who then can I depend upon to choose such a messenger in your stead; surely none so fit as a servant of the Holy Catholic Church, such a one as our well beloved brother of Ross has ever proved himself.”

“Far be it from me,” Rodolphi replied, crossing himself, and assuming the demure look, with which, when it suited his purpose, he was accustomed to veil the cunning that

lurked in his deep set eye. "Far be it from me to cast a suspicion on him, who is selected by a right reverend father, one of the chosen pillars in the fabric of truth ; I only sought to know if it is your Grace's intention to entrust this ally with written credentials, or simply with a verbal message ?"

"No writing, Rodolphi," the duke replied, quickly, "Holy virgin ! dos't think I will risk my life to a bit of paper, which by twenty ways may fall into the hands of an enemy."

"So may your messenger," Rodolphi observed quietly, "and while there are such things as racks, who can be sure that the most faithful will not be driven to confess all he knows, rather than suffer their cursed tortures ? A bit of paper may be burned or swallowed, and then who is the wiser for its contents ?"

The duke shook his head. "No writing, I tell you Rodolphi ; if he of whom Ross writes be such as he is represented, and indeed fit to act

in an enterprise of such high moment, he can endure torture."

The crafty Italian smiled satirically.

"So we all can—in theory, my lord," he said, "but some have told a different tale, when they have felt their sinews cracking under pains that mock the torments of the damned. Credit me, I have lived long in this country of yours, and during the reign of Mary, heaven assoilzie her soul!—I have seen many put to the rack, one thing alone seemed powerful enough to bear the tortured wretch, under such suffering, and that was the fanatic spirit that dwells in the breast of these heretics; some few among them may have shewn a craven spirit, but the greater number despised their cruel agonies. I have seen the hoary head towering above the flames that were around the burning body, and while the wrinkled brow was raised to heaven, with an expression of ecstasy, have heard the aged sufferer

burst into hymns of triumph, when I looked but for the cry of agonized nature. And women too—young and beautiful, I have beheld them walk to the stake as though they were about to plight their faith to some cherished idol at the altar, and endure the bitterness of a burning death without a groan! “’Tis strange,” he muttered to himself, after a pause, “how they seemed supported under such horrors.”

“Ora pro nobis!” the Duke exclaimed, again devoutly crossing himself, a ceremony he never failed to repeat frequently when a zealous Catholic was present, “the fiend is strong within them, making them deaf to the voice of truth. But as touching our plot, good Rodolphi, I wish not aught to be done to the prejudice of Elizabeth’s life, she has ever been a kind and gracious mistress to me, in all save her denial of my wedding with Mary Stuart.”

“Who, as another Herodias, is blinding you

to the things that belong to your eternal peace," thought Rodolphi, then added aloud. "The church requires at the hands of all her faithful servants, vengeance on the arch heretic, now falsely styled Queen of England ; and who, not satisfied with this title, usurps the dignity of his holiness himself, by arrogating to herself, that of head of the church, and defender of the faith, a title which in an evil hour Leo bestowed on that son of Belial, the eighth Henry, when for a season he shewed himself opposed to the founder of this sect, until the devil, by means of a pair of bewitching eyes, brought him over to Luther's side. Who can then doubt the right that every true son of Holy Mother Church has to persecute such even to the death?"

"All that you say may be most true, Rodolphi ; yet I would that the princely Elizabeth might be brought to reason. 'Tis a fearful strait I am in," the Duke continued pacing the

apartment. “On the one side, I am urged forward by the powerful voice of love, while on the other I am restrained by a sense of my sovereign’s benefits—who shall decide between them?”

“Marry that will I, by bidding your Grace lean to the fairer side of the question. Think of the vow which binds you to uphold the true church’s interest, even at the risk of life and limb, though in the present instance, like an indulgent mother, she bids you seek your own gratification, while you seem to act for her alone. Think of the crown, which is courting your acceptance, and of the fair creature who tenders it; and when you have sufficiently contemplated this picture, then good my lord turn to that of your benefactress, as you are pleased to call Elizabeth Tudor, though I see nothing she has done for you, that your high rank and merit have not extorted from her; see the hard service she exacts from those she terms

her servants, unbounded and blind submission, a species of servitude to which the proud noble of England ought never to be subjected. Under this tyrannical thralldom you can never hope to obtain a higher station than you now hold, while, as the husband of Queen Mary, you will possess the substance of royalty, while the shadow rests with her; and once firmly established on the throne, who will dare to dispute your sovereign sway?"

"The die is then cast," the Duke replied, his better feelings giving way beneath the preponderating influence of ambition, "henceforth I will dream of nothing but the advancement of the true church, and the release of our lawful queen. Hand and heart I pledge myself to your master, and while he continues faithful, fear not that Howard will draw back. When we hear more from the good bishop, our plans shall be better digested. Meanwhile, Rodolphi, let this be an earnest of my good will, and the

noble rewards that await you," he drew from his finger a valuable diamond, and placed it in the hand of the wily Italian, whom he would have dismissed, but Rodolphi had not yet gained the object of his present visit.

"A hand so liberal," he said, "well deserves the sceptre, I hope one day to see in it; and now will my gracious master pardon his servant's boldness, if he once more urges, that a letter be written to the King of Spain, that he may learn from yourself, how truly you have entered into his measures. King Philip is cautious, and will not rest content with mere verbal messages."

He paused with an air of deep humility, for, he marked the cloud gathering on Norfolk's brow.

"Did I not tell thee, sirrah," the Duke said, with some asperity, "that I set too great a value upon my head, to risk its rolling like a ball from the felon hand of the executioner? by

heaven ! you will force me to believe you would betray me, and must needs therefore hold some written document to bear testimony against me."

The eye of the Italian kindled like a burning coal.

"Betray !" he said, "who dares couple the name of Rodolphi with that of betrayer ? 'tis true no proud title decks my name, yet was it never tainted with the blood of a traitor ! My lord, I sought not your confidence ; it was thrust upon me—and had not Alva known me one to be trusted, he had not taken such pains to seek me out—betray ! fare ye well, Lord Duke, and when next you need a faithful servant, see that your cold island blood does not lead you to be too cautious."

He drew from his finger Norfolk's gift, and laying it on the table, was about to quit the apartment, when the Duke interposed.

"Pardon me, good Rodolphi," he said, "I

meant not to offend you--can you make no allowance for a mind, sorely burdened by a mighty enterprise? think not I wrong your known fidelity, even in thought, the word escaped me unawares."

Under a sense of wrong, an English temper would take some little time to recover its wonted equanimity, and the cloud which lowered on the brow, be withdrawn by slow degrees, and not without sundry threatenings of again descending. But it is not thus with the people of a more sunny clime; clouds are but little known in their horizon, and when they do appear, the quick lightning flash instantly follows; the mischief, if any arises, is speedily executed, and all is again calm sunshine. Such was the case with Rodolphi; the first impulse, as he heard himself accused of perfidy, urged him to instant and deadly vengeance, but the words of Norfolk turned aside his wrath, and it was gone. He replaced the ring which

the Duke again tendered him, and suffered himself to be led back to his chair, where he waited patiently Norfolk's determination. After a brief pause the latter resumed the conversation.

“ I will but repeat, what I have already said, Rodolphi; that it seems better to me there should be no written document pass between myself and those I am united with in this cause. Yet I may have taken a wrong view of the case, I have much need of reflection, and therefore, good Rodolphi, we will not at present say more on the subject; when next we meet, I shall be prepared to reason more calmly on your proposal, if you were to be the messenger I should fear nothing, but to commit a writing of so much importance to a stranger, seems little short of madness; and now good night, good Rodolphi. May the saints be gracious to us, and grant us success—you shall hear when our messenger arrives, which I trust

will be in a day or too, this suspense wears me sadly, yet I will not shrink, since I fight."

"Sub cruce candida," the artful Italian added, "remember, my lord, that is our watchword, and in a holier, or a better cause, the cross was never yet displayed. All good angels keep your lordship, and crown your wishes with success."

With a profound obeisance, Rodolphi glided from the apartment, with a step as noiseless as when he entered. The Duke cast himself on his knees, breathed a hasty prayer, and sought his bed chamber.

CHAPTER X.

AGAIN passing to the waves of the broad ocean, we must watch the progress of a small boat, in which were seated the pirate and Harry Knox; and having seen it attain the side of a cutter, which was apparently awaiting its arrival, we will accompany Crichton and his companion on board. In the master of this little vessel, the latter had no difficulty in recognizing the smuggler, though, after the first look of surprise this man gave, as Crichton

leaped upon deck, no marks of recognition passed between them.

After a speedy voyage, the cutter gained its destined port, and one by one the passengers departed. Crichton lingered behind, but it was not until he beheld the deck cleared, that he ventured to approach the master, to whom he said in a low tone "Is all well?"

"All well," was the reply, in the same cautious tone, "but what brings you here?"

"I judged it better to come myself, since the man you sent for has played me a foul trick. But does the scheme work well?"

"It has until this minute, but this will spoil all, what foul fiend tempted you to be such a fool?"

"I tell you I could not do otherwise; Kirk has left me, and Parson you say is sick; how does he find time for such folly just now? What could I do?"

"Kirk left you," the master said, while his

countenance fell, "how is this, has he turned blab?"

"No, no! but 'tis a long story, and we must not stand prating here; where shall I meet you this evening, for you must be my help in need, I have set my life on a cast."

"Rash fool!" the other muttered, "where shall we meet?" he said aloud. "At my house, you know where it is; I shall be home at nine, fare ye well till that time. Mister—stay, your name."

"James Crichton," the pirate answered carelessly, and taking Harry Knox by the arm, sauntered slowly away. But it was evident that this appearance of security was but feigned. The young sailor could observe his companion cautiously avert his face from those he met; while the glances he stole behind, told there was a fear of pursuit or surprisal. At length they came in sight of a small public house, and Crichton, complaining of fatigue directed his companion to enter and engage a

a private apartment for a few hours ; this was obtained with some difficulty, and Crichton with a handkerchief to his face, as if suffering from tooth ache, hurried past those who in their officious zeal, came forward to offer the poor gentleman their services, and taking possession of the little dark room, seemed to think he was, for a time at least, in security.

Mean while, feelings of a different nature were agitating the bosom of his companion ; he was once again in London, and in that very house he had sat with his uncle, the evening before they embarked on their luckless expedition. As the recollection stole over him, Harry appeared to see again the mild and honest countenance of poor Ben Franklin, beaming as it ever did on him with pride and affection ; he almost fancied he again heard his uncle's voice, and the joyous laugh, that spoke a mind free from care or guilt. He turned, and his eye fell on the old man's murderer—Then came the

maddening thought, that he had shaken hands with that man of blood, that he had embarked with him in some perilous enterprise, the nature of which was but indistinctly known to him. The stings of conscience were also felt, as he reflected how soon he had forgotten his best friend, and instead of revenging his death, had received into his friendship, the very man who had dealt his death blow.

Had Crichton been less engrossed by his own dark projects, he would probably have marked the change that came over the young sailor; but he was busy revolving schemes for ensuring his own safety, and at the same time for the furtherance of his mad undertaking. In these unpleasant musings on either side, the remainder of the day was consumed, and as the shades of evening fell, Crichton prepared to attend the rendezvous of the smuggler. But he soon found himself completely bewildered, his knowledge of London, and the direction to

the smuggler's abode, which had been secretly put into his hand, was couched in rather obscure terms. Harry Knox, who was better acquainted with the turnings and windings of its numerous streets and alleys, felt but little inclination to impart his knowledge to his companion, since he found that, for the present at least, he was to be kept in ignorance of their ultimate destination. He even felt some inclination to abandon the pirate altogether, and seek for more honourable employment, than attendance on a suspicious character; but a false notion of honour, led him to conclude that his desertion at such a crisis, would be base and cowardly; this feeling, at length overcame his better reason, and prompted him to offer himself as a guide to the spot, where the house in question was situated. They accordingly set forward, and after a walk of some length arrived at a miserable looking cottage, which seemed well calculated for the rendezvous of

those engaged in some dark and desperate undertaking.

Crichton entered, after desiring his companion to await his return ; he was met on the narrow stair by an old woman, who apparently expected a different person, for she uttered an exclamation of surprise and disappointment, as the dim light, she brought on a line with his face, shewed her the features of a stranger.

“Be not alarmed,” Crichton said, “I am a friend, and come by appointment, where is Frank?”

“Not at home,” was the reply,

“And who is with you?” the pirate demanded.

“What does it matter to you, who is in the house?” she answered laconically.

“Nay, good mother, you shall find I know more of your household, than you dream of; there is one laying sick here, whom I must see instantly.”

“My son is not at home,” she answered doggedly, “and I let no one in, while he is

away, but if you come to-morrow, mayhap he will see you."

At this moment, a feeble voice was heard calling Mother, Mabel; the old woman started, and muttering something between her teeth, that savoured strongly of an execration, hurried back to the chamber. Here a sharp altercation took place between this she Cerberus and her charge, who urged with all the vehemence his exhaustion permitted, that the stranger, whose voice he had instantly recognised, should be admitted, a measure which was as strongly opposed by his nurse, who urged the commands of her son, and the danger which he had assured her might accrue to himself as well as to the invalid, should his abode there be known to any one. But her volubility was suddenly checked by the abrupt entrance of the object in dispute himself, who having ascertained that the person he sought was indeed in the house, thought further ceremony unne-

cessary, and regardless of the exclamations of indignation, liberally poured forth by dame Mabel, Crichton walked to the sick man's bed. A ray of joy beamed across his pallid features, as Parson beheld his master beside him, and he eagerly kissed the hand which was held towards him ; but the satisfaction was momentary, as the reflection succeeded, that if detection followed, his master must expiate by an ignominious death, crimes in some of which, he had been an active agent.

To Crichton's kind enquiries how he fared, the sick man replied. " The fever is gone, and so is my strength, or I should not be lingering here, like some old worn out hack, only fit for the hounds."

" And the packet—did you deliver it?"

" I have never stirred from this cursed hole, I fell sick coming over, and crawled here with difficulty ; they have nursed me kindly, though they could not bring me a doctor, seeing I was

light headed, and might have blabbed more than was fit to be told."

"Then you sent the packet?" Crichton demanded with some anxiety.

"No, I knew not whom to trust with it, and here it is safe enough; it will not be long now, before I am able to take it myself."

"You may give it me," Crichton said, "I will see it safe."

"Is Kirk with you?" the sick man asked eagerly.

"No, I am alone."

"Alone! and why are you here at all? did you think I would not do your business faithfully?"

"If I had thought so," Crichton answered soothingly, for he marked the hectic of fever flush the hollow cheek, "I should not have ventured into the lion's den; but you are too ill to talk much now, give me the packet, and if I cannot deliver it myself, we will wait 'till

you are well enough, nobody else shall have it."

"Deliver it yourself!" Parson said, raising himself on his elbow, and gazing in his master's face with eyes, that glared wildly. "Deliver it yourself, that you be taken and hanged!"

"Hush, hush, Parson," the pirate said terrified, lest in the moment of delirium, his follower might betray his real name, and rank. "Your brain is still tormented by this fever; try and sleep, my poor fellow, and I will watch by you."

"But you said," the sick man continued, with the pertinacity of delirium, still dwelling on the thought from which the other sought to turn his attention. "You said you would give the packet into Ross's hand, and he knows you right well, don't you remember in Holy—"

The powerful hand of the pirate was upon the speaker's mouth, and he struggled in vain to free himself from its weight; while Crichton

turning to the old woman, said with an air of stern command, she dared not resist. "Begone beldame ! and leave us alone ; the fool knows not what he says."

His orders were obeyed ; the old woman slowly and reluctantly withdrew, disappointed in her hope of hearing something more from the sick man, from whose ravings she had from time to time learned enough to convince her, that some fearful crime rested heavy on his conscience ; but at such times, her son never failed to interpose, and by supplying her place beside the fevered couch, gave her no opportunity of becoming fully acquainted with the cause of his mental sufferings. The smuggler had never once quitted the house, until he saw Parson, though much weakened in body, completely restored to his senses. Now the excitement attending his master's sudden appearance, operated fearfully on his weakened nerves, and for a time reason again wandered. Vexed

at having her curiosity thus balked, at the moment when she believed it was about to be gratified, old Mabel muttered to herself as she closed the door.

“A plague on ye both! a neat pair I warrant to do the devil’s work. I wish the house was well rid on ye, for there has been no rest in it, night or day, since that screech owl was brought here.”

“How now, mother!” a rough voice broke in with, “benedicite! don’t you know better than to leave the door open in this fashion, is this the order you keep while I’m away?”

“I will keep the door agin mortal man,” the old woman answered sulkily, “but not agin the devil.”

“Who’s within?” the man demanded in evident terror, as the sound of voices met his ear, “stand clear, woman,—if you was not my mother, by St. Peter, but I’d pitch you down stairs.”

He rushed into the room, and as he beheld a stranger bending over the sick man, his first impulse was to hurl a spar of wood, which lay on the floor, at the intruder's head ; but hearing the noise, Crichton turned, and satisfied with the glimpse he caught of the stranger's face, the smuggler dropped the wood, and advanced towards the bed ; but here a new cause of alarm and suspicion met his eye, for he beheld Parson to all appearance lifeless, while a pewter basin containing a quantity of blood, stood on the bed, which was copiously sprinkled with the same tell-tale fluid. The smuggler shuddered. "Have you murdered him to stop his tongue?" he said in a low tone to Crichton, "poor wretch ! he always said it would come to this."

The pirate gave the speaker a withering look as he said, "I am not yet so degraded, as to dip my hand in the blood of a base plebeian, he has but fainted from loss of the mad

blood, I was forced to take from him. You have let him prate ; that should have been stopped at any rate ; but I must not let him see me again, it may kill him, poor fellow ! his whole cry is of the danger I am about to meet ; by heaven, he has well nigh unmanned me.”

“Then be persuaded,” the smuggler replied earnestly, “danger will indeed meet you, if you madly insist on delivering this packet yourself. Give it me, I will put it safely into Ross’ hand, and do you return to Orkney.”

“When my revenge is completed,” Crichton answered, “till that time—never. But come, Frank, help me to some disguise, for in the fashion I am now, I shall hardly escape notice.” He took the packet from its case, and holding it up, said laughing, “What would Queen Bess give to be possessed of these? The stingy jade might be brought to part with the brightest jewel in her crown ; how say you, Frank?

will you earn the golden reward by delivering them and me into her power?"

"I know not what I might be tempted to do if you alone were concerned; but all the wealth of England would be of little use, if it came to me with a curse upon it, for you know I have pledged myself body and soul, to see Mary Stuart in her right place again."

"I know you for an honest fellow," the pirate said, resuming his serious air, "but time presses; I have one without, waiting for me, who may grow impatient; have you not some dress at hand, that may blind the eyes of those who might perchance trouble me with questions, more easily asked than answered?"

"I can fit you to a hair," the smuggler answered. "And come away now, for look, he moves;" he pointed to Parson, who was making a feeble effort to raise his head from the wooden bolster that supported it. Crichton

drew back, that he might not again meet the eye of his suffering attendant, and Frank, going to the door, called his mother to resume her charge. Mabel, on her first entering the room, cast a hurried glance at Crichton, in which fear and dislike were mingled, then approaching her patient.

“Jesu Maria!” she exclaimed, “What is this? Murder, I warrant! but the villain shall not escape, if I die for it.” Thus saying, she darted from the room, regardless of the threats and commands of her son, who sought in vain to stop her progress. Mabel rushed out of the house, shrieking murder, until the narrow street rang again.

Harry Knox, who during this time had been pacing up and down, weary and impatient with the protracted absence of Crichton, had just placed himself before the door, resolved that if the pirate did not soon make his appearance, to remind him how time was passing, when he

beheld the door open, and the old woman dart past him, uttering as she did so, the most appalling of sounds, that of murder ! Not doubting that Crichton had become involved in some quarrel, in which, he had either fallen himself, or deprived some one of life, the young sailor rushed precipitately up the miserable staircase, and entered the chamber, which was lighted by a single rush candle ; the room appeared empty, but the blood with which the floor was crimsoned, owing to the basin having been upset in the confusion incident to Mabel's ill-timed exit, fully confirmed the old woman's words and led Harry to conclude, that the man stretched on the bed had indeed been ruthlessly deprived of life.

Few moments were allowed him for reflection, the sound of many feet climbing the stair was heard, and presently an ominous face, surmounted by a woollen night cap, and preceded by a formidable weapon, between a spear and

the more modern pike, became visible, while the voice of old Mabel was again raised in clamour. She had just become sensible, that her zeal for the punishment of a murderer might perchance involve her darling son in some slight embarrassment; seeing he was with the assassin, who moreover appeared an acquaintance at least, if not an intimate friend, and now filled with maternal anxiety, old Mabel raised such a din in the guardian of the night's ears, as she assured him, again and again, that her son was as innocent as the babe unborn, that old Dogberry was tempted to add her murder to that he had been called upon to avenge.

It is more than probable, he would have taken active measures to silence his tormentor had not the fear of an assault on the part of the prisoner that was to be, kept the watchman still on the advance; one furtive glance *en arrière* was all he indulged himself with, and in some

degree comforted by the assurance it gave him, that many supporters were at hand, he boldly rushed on the solitary figure before him, presenting his pike, and crying out "stand, or I fire!"

Resistance would have been folly, with such a formidable weapon at his breast, and as Harry Knox felt no apprehension respecting the termination of this affair, he began coolly to explain the cause of his being found so near one whom he likewise firmly believed had been murdered; but this confidence in the goodness of his cause waxed fainter, as he found he had to do with one equally deaf to reason and common sense.

"A murder has been committed," it was thus the sapient guardian of the night argued, "as this dead body certifies, you are found by the murdered man; ergo, was the conclusion, you must be the murderer." To this just reasoning the old woman added her testimony.

“The dead man ” she said, “ was alive and well, when she left him to speak with the prisoner, who, in the midst of their parley, suddenly whisked past her, and going into the room, began to talk in some strange language ; that the poor deceased was very angry, when he, the prisoner, having forcibly turned her out of the apartment, fell to work, and in spite of the man’s entreaties for mercy, which she heard with her own ears, murdered him in the manner they saw.” During this deposition, Mabel had cautiously avoided referring to her son, who she concluded, had wisely made his escape.

“ Will you dare, old hag,” Harry Knox at last broke in with, driven past his patience by the fiction she so resolutely maintained, “ will you say that you ever spoke to me in all your life before this moment ?”

“ Marry come up,” the old woman replied, setting her arms akimbo, “ did’nt I refuse your

coming in, about two hours ago, and didn't you push me off my own door sill, telling me you would come in?"

"'Tis false as hell," he replied, "I came but in when I heard you cry for help; but there was one, who came in at the time you speak off, and I would know where he is?"

"Hear ye till, him!" Mabel exclaimed, turning to the watchman, "hear how he would shift the wickedness from his own shoulders, on any body's else's, he would! but, an ye let the murtherer go, I'll take the law on ye."

"Come, young sir," the watchman said moving Harry with the end of his pike, "you must just take up your lodgings in the round house, to night; and to-morrow we must be jogging betimes to the justice."

"Touch me at your peril!" the prisoner vociferated, "that old hag, whom I swear I never saw, until she entered the room with you, has

borne false witness against me, and if you do not let me go free, you shall dearly pay for it. I came here in search of a friend, who entered this house, and I charge you to make this woman confess what is become of him."

"It won't do, youngster," the watchman answered, with provoking coolness, and a knowing nod, "I an't to be done so; you would persuade me you an't your own self would you? but Timothy Jenkins hasn't lived all these years in Lunnun without being up to such tricks; so no more palaver, you must come with me till we see whether or no the Crowner brings it in lawful murder, in which case you stand a good chance of taking the air in your nightcap. Dame," he continued turning to Mabel, "see that nobody touches the corpse, or any other piece of furniture in the room, till such time as the 'quest has been held."

So saying, he again advanced towards Harry Knox, for the purpose of enforcing his man-

date, and a severe struggle ensued, when as the valiant watch called aloud to his compeers for assistance, his cry was disagreeably attended to, even by the defunct himself, who recovering from another severe swoon, the effect of weakness and copious phlebotomy, feebly demanded the cause of the outcry ; then staring wildly round, as he raised himself on the pillow, said, in a hollow voice, “ where is he ? ”

Few remained to answer his question, even had the purport of it been understood. A general rush towards the door shewed the effect of this sudden resuscitation on the nerves of the bystanders, while the darkness of the staircase encreased their panic ; but who could doubt the choice ? Certain danger was before them it is true, but that was well defined, and a broken limb or even neck might be dreaded in a moment of less excitement ; the cause and effect were open and apparent, therefore not now to be brought into competition with the

vague horrors which each pourtrayed, as fancy led, were coming fast and thick behind. There was no time for deliberation, the foremost made a rush, stumbled, fell—others crowded over him; the few who reached the door in safety, rushed onward, forgetful of their less fortunate friends and relatives, while by far the greater number lay helpless victims, for the feet of those hobgoblins, they fancied after them, to dance upon.

In the meantime Harry Knox, supposing that Parson would, by his explanation, free him from his unpleasant situation, advanced towards the bed, entreating the sick man to say what had brought him to such an extraordinary state; but bewildered by fever, and too much exhausted to enquire further into the cause of the confusion around. Parson, after ascertaining that his master was not near, fell back, and remained with his eyes closed, unable or unwilling to utter a word. No further charge

could be preferred for murder, seeing the man, though reduced to death's door, had yet escaped with life; but unwilling to part with his prize, the watchman found ample grounds for detaining him, and others of the brotherhood being drawn to the spot, by the confused rumours that had reached them of the lord knows what, our hero in spite of a manful resistance was borne off to give an account to the higher authorities for the heinous offence of feigning himself another man.

We must now for a moment return to Crichton and his companion, who, as we have seen, wisely took flight, as soon as the tongue of old Mabel sounded the alarm; escaping by the back door, they quickly reached some fields, and such was the terror, which seized upon the pirate, who believed his detection inevitable, that after advancing a few steps by the side of a hedge, he suddenly sank down, declaring he could go no further. Remonstrances were

fruitless; with a sort of calm courage, despair sometimes inspires, he expressed his resolution of there meeting the fate he could no longer avoid. Cursing the foolery which had brought Crichton to England, and still more the cowardly fear, so poorly covered by the veil of resolution, the smuggler placed himself as sentinel in the path, by which danger was most likely to approach. But the dreaded pursuit came not, and after two hours passed in this situation, Crichton was at last prevailed on to seek shelter and repose.

Deeply engaged in the plots then in agitation for setting Mary Stuart at liberty, the smuggler had no difficulty in finding one of his own party, to whose care he committed his exhausted companion for the night; giving his host such an insight into his history, as shewed him his guest was a warm partisan of the Scottish queen; without however confiding to him the name or rank of his companion, lest an

itching palm might be a besetting sin of this worthy son of Holy Mother Church, and render him unable to withstand the gold, which would cross it upon Crichton's betrayal. Frank then returned to his own cottage, making his advances cautiously, until he ascertained all was safe. He found old Mabel carefully tending the suffering Parson, and wisely deferring the gentle admonition he promised himself the pleasure of giving her, until the next day, seeing her shrill tones might have a fatal effect on the patient, betook himself to his rude couch, and soon lost in sleep the recollection of his late alarm.

The next day found Crichton metamorphosed into an itinerant dealer ; a pack strapped to his shoulders, and bearing in his hand, not a magic wand, but the more substantial ell measure, by means of which, the money is as successfully conjured from the purse of the credulous, as ever the senses were bewitched by its all

powerful semblance ; his hair, which was beginning to show the withering hand of time, was lost under a brilliant yellow wig, a well starched ruff was so disposed as to hide the lower part of the face, while the upper part was as effectually secured from observation by a modest beaver, guiltless of nap, and which, being originally intended for a head somewhat more capacious than the one, that now occupied it, drooped over his forehead in a manner, which threatened to blind him alike to the beauties or dangers of the path he trod.

Completely screened from suspicion, save on the score of sanity, by this disguise, Crichton once more took his way to the cottage, but he durst not venture across the threshold, the remembrance of Mabel's shrill cry still haunted him, and he therefore contented himself with pacing up and down the street, until he caught a glimpse of his friend the smuggler. To all his questions respecting Knox, he could obtain

no satisfactory reply ; all that Frank could tell him was, that some one had been carried off by the watch, but who it was, Mabel could not explain, as she still insisted that it was the very man who had so rudely forced his entrance, and consequently Crichton himself. All the smuggler could promise, was to make every enquiry respecting the youth, and keep safe until the pirate's return, on whom he now urged the necessity of his instantly quitting a neighbourhood, rendered doubly perilous to him ; since should any thing be elicited from Harry Knox, a strict search would be the consequence.

Crichton was fain to admit the justice of the suggestion, and though reluctant to leave his young friend in a situation so fraught with peril, yet, self-preservation, that first great law of our nature, urged his departure, and he who was once surrounded by flattering crowds, now turned a lonely wanderer, without one attendant. Worldly friendship, what art thou ? A

bubble on the waters of life, dancing for a moment in the sunshine of prosperity, we watch with delight the brilliant delusion reflecting heaven's own azure, until we forget the empty air it is composed of; suddenly the wave that bears it is ruffled—will it abide the change from smooth to rough? Ask the thousand aching hearts that have reposed on the friendship of the world.

CHAPTER XI.

HOWEVER a man may be supported under the pressure of calamity, by inbred courage and conscious innocence, there are few minds, that will not bend beneath the weight, at least for a moment, should he find himself without one friend to stand by him in the hour of need. A night passed in the wretched den appropriated to transgressors was in itself sufficient to quell human courage, and Harry Knox felt the full force of its baneful influence. His situation

was embarrassing enough, since, though no crime could now be charged upon him, the dead having been found alive, still the suspicious circumstance of his being found in a strange house at such an hour, and the impossibility he felt of giving such an account of himself, as should clear him of all suspicion, rendered him in no small degree anxious respecting the termination of his present adventure. He could not help feeling much on account of Crichton, for having imperceptibly become attached to that singular man, the uncertainty he experienced with regard to his fate was a heavy addition to his own troubles. These gloomy cogitations were from time to time interrupted by the dull heavy sound which broke the stillness of night, as the bells from the neighbouring steeples told the passing hours. By degrees other and nearer sounds drowned the prisoner's reflections as the watchful guardians of the night brought in fresh delinquents to

await the stern rebuke, or in some cases a more severe penalty due to the violator of those stilly hours which should be devoted to the sweet soother of our cares and weariness, sleep—hours which a beneficent Creator set apart for the rest and refreshment of his feeble creatures, but, like many of his best gifts converted, by the folly and wickedness of man, into a season when he can the more securely work the evil he deviseth in secret ; the curtain is then drawn round, which he fondly imagines will at once screen him from the observation of his fellow-creatures, and from that eye his conscience whispers is sometimes upon him ; but which he would fain persuade himself, like that of man, slumbereth during the darkness.

Most of those brought in to share the prison house of Harry Knox were in a state of intoxication, and according to the workings of the evil spirit within, some heavy natures on whom the enemy acted as a soporific, were soon snor-

ing off the effects of their intemperance; while on others of a more lively temperament those effects were altogether of a different complexion; the potent draught that had overpowered the duller brains of their companions had but added fresh excitement to the volatile particles with which theirs abounded, inciting them to noise and riot. Shouts, laughter, and snatches of song mingled together in one wild chorus, while some of the more diabolical spirits were essaying to finish the contest which in all probability led to their being deprived of liberty. The scene was altogether such as the pencil of Hogarth alone could do justice to.

Why should the imagination of the enthusiast be racked to pourtray the evil spirits inhabitants of that place to which he so liberally consigns all who will not; in theory at least, conform to his creed; let him but draw a faithful likeness of his fellow men, when under the debasing influence of intoxicating liquors,

all further trouble will be spared, and, in one case at least, reality be found to surpass the ideal.

It was with much satisfaction Harry Knox received the early summons that called him from among the disgusting crew; and the fresh cold air of morning, which met his fevered brow as he left the door, seemed to renew his courage. After traversing part of the city, so unlike the modern London, whose splendid edifices, parks, gardens, equipages, wealth and magnificence, if accurately portrayed in the time of the virgin queen, must have seemed some fairy land, existing only in the imagination of the painter, so strangely would it have contrasted with the narrow and gloomy streets, from which the light of heaven, even at noon day, was almost excluded by the edifices on either side, which contrary to the general rule appearing to find a more attractive power in proportion, as they were elevated above the

earth, threatened to meet in the friendly embrace they seemed earnestly to desire; lower down too, a link bound them together, the huge signs which extended across the narrow streets and answered a double purpose, as that part of the posts which was rooted in the ground by embarrassing passengers' feet, obliged them frequently to pause at the shop door, though it could not prevail on them to enter, while the loud creaking of the frames compelled the most abstracted to pay a momentary attention to their several exhibitions; this was further enforced by the incessant cry of "what do ye lack" that resounded from the low dark edifices which held the place of those sumptuous boutiques, where are displayed to the fullest advantage, rich and costly things that rival all we read of in those glowing descriptions of oriental luxury, and deemed exclusively the attributes of the voluptuous climes of the east, now brought home to us, in this, our queen of

modern cities, and forming an assemblage of attractions that, like some gay parterre, draws around creatures of light and loveliness, who wanting the wing of the butterfly, imitate its brilliant hues in the robes which adorn them, and show, in some instances at least, that they possess its volatility.

But we are losing our hero in a blaze of splendour, which was far from illumining his melancholy walk from prison to the hall of justice. Here too, we might pause to compare old things with new, and entertain our readers by trite remarks upon time's changes; but sufficient has been said to show the advantages those changes have brought with them, in luxury and refinement; how far these are compatible with the daring courage and lion nerve which distinguished the patriots of the olden time, let those determine who love to dwell on the history of the rise and fall of nations, enough is there recorded to shew, that the

soil which bears the tree of liberty may not be enriched beyond a certain point, or instead of those healthful juices which invigorate, there will be drawn a different nourishment, calculated, indeed, to produce an appearance of greater beauty, a richer foliage, a brighter germ, but too surely sapping the root, and ending in decay.

The hall into which Harry Knox, his attendants, and accusers, were ushered, was but feebly lighted by the morning ray, that found its way through the latticed casement. Never could the brilliant image, which adorned the neck of an Egyptian judge, have been more appropriately displayed, since not only would it have served to enlighten the darkness visible of the apartment, but a ray of its divine effulgence might perchance have penetrated the president's breast, and cleared off some of the more concealed, though not less opaque shade, that rested on his mind.

The Justice was one of those common-place persons, who form by far the greater portion of earth's inhabitants, and who may with truth be described as made up of negatives; he was neither tall nor short, neither fair nor dark, neither handsome nor ugly, neither clever nor stupid; but not to multiply these particles needlessly, we will simply state, what were the qualities which had recommended him to his present station, the same which, in these more enlightened times, puts many a simpleton and many a rogue, in the place of wiser and more honest men,—a friend at court.

The numerous plots undertaken by the Papists, at once to destroy the reigning queen, whom they justly regarded as one of the principal bulwarks of the Protestant cause, and to place upon her throne, one whose whole conduct had testified how firmly the lessons inculcated by a corrupt court, in which her infant mind was formed, had taken root. The tragedy

acted on St. Bartholomew's Eve, at Paris, had raised their hopes, and they fondly persuaded themselves, that could the daughter of Mary of Guise, be once securely established on the throne of England, it would not be difficult to persuade her to concur in a similar execution, and thus, by a bold stroke of barbarous policy, rid two countries of the larger portion of their dreaded enemies. In such a state of affairs, it may readily be imagined, that many individuals were found, who, either actuated by blind zeal, or that love of the marvellous, so deeply rooted in the human heart, found abundance to keep alive the rumours of plots incessantly in circulation ; in many instances, these were set afloat by the Jesuits themselves, to draw off the attention of the inquisitive from their actual proceedings.

Though naturally indolent, the official personage before whom our hero was conducted,

was ever alive to any thing that promised to recommend him to his patron and the court in general. Since he had been placed in office, no favourable opportunity had occurred of proving his zealous attachment to the queen, and the Protestant religion ; nothing had come before him, save the petty offences arising from a too frequent application to Sir John Barley-corn, or that spirit of mischief, which reigned in all its glory in the breasts of the London prentices, a daring body, that setting at defiance all law and reason, was one of the most serious evils which the city of London in those days, had cause to complain of. It was in vain those appointed to watch over the quiet of the city, sought to restrain these youths in their mad career ; the cry of “ prentices ! prentices ! clubs ! clubs ! ” so frequently echoed through the streets by day, and by night, never failed to bring forth such a swarm of these wild spirits,

that it required a strong force of stout hearts, as well as arms, to retain any straggler chance might throw into the hands of justice.

When, therefore, the Justice raised his head, and beheld one, whose dress sufficiently indicated that he belonged not to the above mentioned class, and whose steady step forbade the supposition that he had partaken too freely of the ale cup, the idea of a popish spy readily suggested itself, and not doubting the hour, so eagerly longed for, had, at length, arrived, and that some terrible plot was on the eve of discovery, he summoned all of the majesty, which he flattered himself dwelt in his fair round proportions, and sat erect to hear, and hearing, judge.

“How now, Jenkins?” he began addressing the watchman, “who have we here?”

“A prisoner your worship.”

“Humph! so I see; but what is the charge against him?”

“ Murder, an’ please your worship.”

“ So I guessed by the cut throat look about him ; well let me hear the particulars. Clerk, note down the deposition.”

“ Why then your worship, I’ll tell you all about it. Last night about half arter eleven, as I was on my beat, I heard a woman screaming murder ! it was so dark I could’nt see a hinch afore me, so I ax’d her what was the matter, but instead of answering me, she run screeching down the street. Then your worship, I goes into the house, she come out on, for in the hurry she had left the door wide open, and finding nobody below, I goes up stairs, and there I see a man laying on the bed with his throat cut, and this here chap standing along side on him, with a basin full of blood in one hand and a knife in the tother. When he seed me, he chucked down the basin and would ha’ bolted, but I held him fast and here he is your worship.”

“Have you any other witness to the fact?” the Justice demanded, somewhat disappointed to find that simple murder and not the more heinous offence of popery, was charged upon the prisoner.

“There was plenty as saw the murdered man,” Jenkins answered, “but I found nobody in the room, but this spark ; and when the woman came back she charged me with him as the murderer.”

“And where is the woman ? bring her forward.”

“She has’nt come, your worship, she told me she durs’nt leave the sick man for all the justices in the univarse,”

“What sick man ? I thought you stated just nōw there was no one in the room, but the murdered man and the prisoner ; recollect yourself, sir, and be more particular.”

“The truth’s the truth,” Jenkins muttered doggedly. “But your deposition involves a

manifest contradiction man, and I am here to see justice administered, in the clearest manner, so that if a person is convicted, not a shadow of doubt shall rest on any mind, concerning his guilt ; while if I see fit to dismiss him, not a suspicion shall remain touching his innocence ; but how can I order a mittimus to be drawn out for the committal of this prisoner or dismiss him as innocent, if you are so incorrect in your evidence ?”

“The person said something the other day,” Jenkins replied, while a ludicrous expression passed over his features, mingling a consciousness of the import of his speech with fear for its effect, “about light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehending it not. I mind the words, for he made me get them by heart ; now, mayhap, it is the same with your worship, the truth may be likened to light shining from me, and your mind to the darkness which comprehendeth not.”

“Peace, sirrah! your tongue outruns your wit—bring forward the prisoner, I wish to put a few questions to him. So young man,” the mortified Justice continued, addressing the prisoner, “your career of wickedness is likely to be soon ended; your years are few, but you seem old in iniquity; what account can you give of yourself? Remember, you are not called on to say any thing to criminate yourself, though, indeed, you can hardly make your case worse, since you stand clearly condemned in my mind, and I flatter myself that great experience in the jurisprudence of this country, gives me the power of at once determining as to the guilt or innocence of a prisoner. Your name.”

“Harry Knox.”

“Are you a native of England?”

“No, I am a Scot.”

“The less likely to be an honest man,”

observed the impartial judge, "have you any relations or friends in this country?"

"Relatives I have none," the young sailor replied, "and for my friends they, God wot, are but few."

"What cause of enmity had you against the unfortunate man you have killed?"

"I have killed no one," the youth answered, "you yourself heard this man testify, that he left the woman, on whose evidence I was dragged here, nursing the man I am accused of having murdered."

"What am I to understand by all this," the Justice said looking round in utter bewilderment, "speak Jenkins, how have you dared to bring such a ridiculous charge before me; are you mad or drunk?"

"If your worship hadn't been in sitch a hurry," Jenkins answered, somewhat crest fallen, "I meant to have explained, that it

wa'nt altogether on the charge of murder, I brought this youngster here, seeing as your honor says, that would ha' been ridiculous, for the dead man hisself told me, no murder had been committed, but finden as how, he couldn't or wouldn't give no account of hisself, and what he did in the house that time o'night, I guessed he was a friend of the Pope, and by the same token, an enemy to God and man."

The Justice's countenance brightened. A popish plot, in all its glory, rose before him, and he already heard the praises bestowed on the zeal and ability, with which he had tracked the monster through all its intricate windings, and felt the sword on his shoulder, conferring on him the envied title of Sir Barnacle, precursor to those loftier titles and more noble rewards, which he doubted not would be heaped upon him by a grateful queen, whose tottering throne had been propped by his interposition."

“For what cause did you come to England?” he demanded.

“I came with a friend.”

“Yet you just now said you had no friends in this country ; no prevaricating, young man ; who is this friend, and where is he to be found ?”

The patience of the young sailor had, for some time past, been waxing more and more feeble, now it gave way entirely, and addressing himself to the Justice, he said haughtily, “I have been brought here on a charge which has been clearly proved unfounded ; and I now claim the privilege of an acquitted prisoner, that of departing withour further hinderance.”

“Fair and softly young sir ; it is true my honest friend here has failed to establish the ostensible reason, for his bringing you before me, but enough has been said to warrant your detention, until you give a more satisfactory account of yourself, for in default of your doing

so, I am bound, as a loyal subject of our gracious queen, to hand you over to higher authority.’”

“ Detain me at your peril !” Harry Knox said, thoroughly provoked at the situation in which he found himself placed, by two ignorant men ; and apprehensive that ill consequences might arise to Crichton from his detention ; but to his passionate exclamation, the Justice answered with provoking calmness.

“ Give me such an account of yourself, as may justify my setting you at liberty ; there is mystery about you, young man, and wherever there is mystery there is some cause for concealment ; your dress bespeaks the sailor, but your proud bearing gives the lie to your garb—once more your name ?”

“ I have already given it ; thank God, I have no reason to be ashamed of it—Harry Knox.”

“ And your business in England ?”

“ Only concerns myself ; I have given you

all the account of myself you will get from me ; it will therefore spare both time and breath if no further questions are put."

Though not gifted with much shrewdness, save where self-interest was concerned, the Justice had sufficient tact to discover, that he had to do with one whose mulish propensities discovered themselves on the slightest attempt being made to drive him towards the purposed goal.

" I must go cunningly to work with the young springald," he thought, "'tis an opportunity that may never again present itself ; he certainly is a Papist, or I never set eyes on one. Have you sufficiently considered the consequences of your obstinacy, my young friend ?" he said, in a tone calculated to soothe the irritated temper of his prisoner, " And are you not aware that my duty as a loyal subject of Queen Elizabeth obliges me sometimes to act against more kindly feeling that might perhaps

prompt your acquittal. I may not consistently with that duty dismiss any person, while suspicion rests upon him. The situation in which you were found is highly suspicious, while your refusing to account how you came there is still more so."

"I have never refused to account for my being in the room, where this man found me," Harry Knox answered, "I was waiting for a friend, who had entered the house on business of his own, when I was alarmed by the cries of a woman, who suddenly rushed from it, and fearing my friend had been in some way entrapped, I made no scruple of entering in search of him. Chance led me to a room where lay a man to all appearance dead, and from the quantity of blood on the bed and floor, I was led to suppose murder had been committed; but my conjectures were cut short by the reappearance of the woman, whose cries first alarmed me, accompanied by this man and

several other persons ; she charged me with the murder, though the fact was sufficiently disproved by the supposed dead man being found alive ; yet I was dragged from the room, and obliged to pass the night among the vilest wretches, while here I find myself treated as if I were really guilty of a crime, which has never been committed.”

The Justice shook his head.

“Your story is ingenious enough,” he said, “though there is little probability in it ; but where is this friend you speak of, and why does he not come forward to corroborate your testimony, his presence would go far towards your release ; where is he to be found ? I will send for him.”

“I have not seen him since he entered the house” Harry answered with some embarrassment, “and I know not where he is.”

There was a pause of some moments, during which the Justice sought to determine how he

should proceed. That some mystery hung over his prisoner was clear, and he would have given much to be able to unravel it; but wanting that shrewd sense and quickness of intellect, which should belong to those whose province it is to unfold the complicated shroudings of human cunning, he felt it would be the wiser plan to hand the prisoner over to those better calculated to obtain the clue necessary to its development. But then to be obliged to confess himself unable to manage the investigation, how mortifying! And worse than all, to lose the honours which must be his, if a plot could be discovered; it was a bitter pill, yet he must swallow it, and covering his mortification as best he might, the worthy gentleman first addressed himself to poor Jenkins, whom he rated most roundly for stupidity, in bringing a prisoner before him charged with an offence he could not substantiate; and next, for having failed to elicit something on which a distinct

charge could be founded: then turning to Harry Knox, he thus continued,

“I find myself bound, young man, to commit you.”

“On what grounds? No offence has been proved against me, and the law will not permit any man to be deprived of liberty, unless he has broken it—with what do I stand charged?”

“I shall commit you as contumacious, since you refuse to answer distinctly the questions I put, and which tend to throw a light upon the mysterious circumstances that led to your being brought before me.”

“Fools ever delight in mystery,” Harry Knox answered with bitterness, “I have sufficiently explained those circumstances to satisfy any sensible man, that my appearance in that house, even at such an hour, had nothing sinister in it.”

“You refuse to give up the name of the friend you say you were with that evening ;

what is your motive for concealing that or his abode?"

"Touching his name, though I may unhesitatingly give my own to whoever shall ask it, I have no warrant to take the same liberty with that of another man; and for his abode, I have not given you that, simply because I am ignorant of it myself."

"Yet you will be obliged to give a clearer account, both of your friend and of yourself, young sir, before you are set at liberty. But my time is precious, and I have given you every opportunity of removing the suspicion resting on my mind. You have refused to do so, and I am bound to commit you. Clerk, draw out the mittimus for the prisoner's committal as a suspicious character, and for contumaciously refusing to answer the questions put to him."

This being done in due form, the young sailor was hurried off to a place of greater secu-

city, there to abide the strict examination, which could not fail to result from the alarming account which this enlightened functionary had thought fit to give concerning him. This important affair terminated, the official proceeded to distribute justice among the crowd assembled before his dread tribunal; and from the specimen given of his discriminating powers, it will hardly be doubted, that the various cases submitted to his arbitration were settled in a manner, that gave no reason to call in question the wisdom which has pourtrayed justice with blinded eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

WE left Crichton on his way to the bishop of Ross, bearing with him an important packet ; which should have been delivered some weeks before, by his faithful attendant Parson, who was dispatched with it from the island, and whose return had been impatiently watched for by the pirate. Finding his messenger's stay prolonged beyond the time, when he might have been reasonably expected, Crichton's anxiety rose beyond the power of restraint,

and but little accustomed to controul the fiery passions which impelled him, he set out for the purpose of meeting his tardy courier; the pirate's first intention extended no further, and he was far from anticipating the perilous course he was induced to adopt, when he found on his arrival at the smuggler's cottage, that the man to whom this important packet had been entrusted, was prevented by severe illness from conveying the papers to their destination.

In this emergency, to whom could Crichton confide them? His knowledge of Harry Knox, though highly favourable as far as it went, was yet too limited to permit him at once to unveil to the youth their dark plot, in all its startling realities. But, even had he determined to dispatch the young sailor to the right reverend father, the untoward accident already noticed would have completely frustrated the arrangement. "I will bear the packet to Ross, myself," was the final determination of Crichton.

ton, "and then there will be no fear of treachery."

As nothing material occurred on his journey, we will avail ourselves of the time it occupied, to lay before those readers, whose memories not being burthened with tales of olden times, may not clearly comprehend the matter, a brief sketch of those points of history, more immediately affecting the personages, we have feebly essayed to bring before them.

Enough has been said, to shew, that the scene of our tale is laid during the captivity of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, whose beauty, talent, and power of fascination, still form a theme that poets and painters love to dwell on; but what availed the enchantment, that youth, beauty, and the soft witchery of woman threw around her, or the diadem that encircled her brow? The nature of the times in which this lovely star appeared, was too rugged to feel its influence. In vain should the butterfly seek to

impart its delicate tints and downy softness to the flinty rock ; thus every effort made by this beautiful, but unfortunate woman to assimilate her own nature with that of her ferocious subjects, had a similar effect, and like the poor insect, she was torn, and bruised, and wounded.

The stern bosom of the Scottish noble, rendered still more invulnerable by a gloomy fanaticism, so often suffered to assume the guise of that religion, which in its own pure loveliness softens the rugged heart of man, fitting it for the reception of all those sweet virtues, that render him more worthy the heavenly image he bears ; while on the contrary, that creed taught by those whose presumptuous boast it is, that they alone are the chosen remnant to be hereafter blessed, is only calculated to contract the human heart, and make it the receptacle of those selfish and pharasaical feelings, as opposite in their effects to the true spirit of Christianity, as darkness is opposed

to light; yet while the feeling heart cannot withhold the pity and commiseration, so justly due to one, whose life was a tissue of misfortunes, let not the brilliant halo, which high rank and splendid endowments threw around Mary Stuart, render us blind to the defects so conspicuous in her character—defects which we may with reason ascribe to first impressions, always the strongest. And where were those impressions received? At that court whose name for craft, cruelty, and voluptuousness, stands first in modern history.

Parents who covet for your daughters, what are falsely termed the *advantages* of a French education, pause for one moment, before you expose them to the debasing influence of that country in which Mary of Scotland was educated. True, the beauty and wickedness of a Catherine de Medecis, have long been covered by the tomb, the weakness and crimes of a Charles the Ninth, or a Henry the Third; or

the dangerous licence of the court of Henri Quatre, more to be dreaded, because his fascinations and chivalrous valour shed a lustre over his vices. All these now only live in the pages of history, like warning beacons, to tell us how dangerous are the gifts of high birth, beauty, and talents, when made subservient to vice; but the air of France too surely imbibed the poisonous influence of those times, ever again to recover the healthful tone, which alone can nourish that immortal plant, virtue; a short time it will be found to flourish there, the withering simoon is not more certain in its effects than the air of that land; when it passes over the sweet flower—it droops and dies. Pardon this digression, gentle reader, it sprang involuntarily from the pen of one, who having witnessed the awful precipice on the brink of which her young countrywomen are compelled to stand, when the giddiness of youth renders them more unfit to escape the danger, would

fain, if possible, save one victim from destruction.

We are then to imagine Mary Stuart closely confined in the dominions of her proud and vindictive rival; and without pausing on the event, which preceded her imprisonment, or seeking to determine how far the crimes laid to her charge were strictly true, emanating as they did from those, whose brief authority must have ceased if a nation's voice had pronounced them false, we will come at once to that period when, weary of a prison, and with every feeling we may naturally suppose dwells in the breast of one accustomed to command, outraged by the tyrannical conduct of that Queen in whose power she had so unwittingly placed herself, Mary was induced to lend a willing ear to the suit of one of the most powerful nobles of the English court, and to engage in a plot, devised by his friends rather than by himself, for the determination essential to such

an underetaking, formed no part of Norfolk's character, and which promised, if successful, to set the captive Queen at liberty ; while her marriage with Norfolk by uniting her interest with that of a powerful noble, would bring over to Mary's side, many of Elizabeth's subjects, who were held back by the feeling, that Mary as a sovereign, for the stories they had heard of her French attendants and French guards, made them regard her as such, had no claim to the allegiance of Englishmen.

One of the most active agents in this plot was Rodolphi, whom we have already spoken of, quick, subtle, penetrating, and thus well calculated to counteract the bad effects which Norfolk's coldness and vacillation could not fail to take on an enterprise, which, while it called for a sound judgment to plan, also demanded a prompt and firm hand to execute. To the fiery Italian was joined the Bishop of Ross, who was devoted to the Church of Rome,

and the Queen of Scotland, and who, therefore, readily gave his aid to a scheme, which promised to elevate both to that pitch of power in England, he devoutly believed their right.

At the time when the Scottish nation dispatched a deputation to Mary, then in France, soliciting her to return and take upon herself the government of her native country, that composed of Protestants, and headed by the Prior of St. Andrew's, was forestalled by the more zealous Catholic party, who dispatched the Bishop of Ross, a title, however, which he did not then bear, to pay their court to their young Queen, a task which he performed with all the ardour, that can spring from the heart alone. He failed not to instil into Mary's mind suspicions, touching the Protestant part of her subjects, representing them as inimical to her government, and strongly advising her to aim at once at the overthrow of a sect, abhorred by all good Catholics. He promised

that if she followed this advice, and landed at Aberdeen, she should in a few days be joined by a force sufficient to enable her to crush that sect, which at present had not made any considerable progress in that part of the kingdom, and which he thought could hardly be firmly established in any part of Scotland. Fortunately for Mary, the wise policy of her uncles prevailed against the tempting prospects held out by the bishops; they were too well acquainted, through the medium of those officers who had served in Scotland, with the number and power of the Protestants there, to dream of overcoming them by open violence, and guided by her uncles' wise counsel, Mary determined rather to win these sturdy heretics by kindness, and employing their leading men as her ministers, take from them all wish to disturb her government.

But though, for a time, his fiery zeal was repressed, the flame still burned brightly within.

him, and Ross never lost an opportunity to further the interest of the Scottish queen, and to harass her rival; now he believed the time was at hand, when he should have the double gratification of triumphing over the enemies of his religion, and restoring her, he judged the legitimate sovereign, to the throne of her ancestors. The opposition of Elizabeth to the union of Mary and Norfolk, and which evidently arose from the dread entertained by that wise and politic princess, of her rival's obtaining any such powerful interest in her own dominions, was eagerly seized by the Bishop of Ross, in conjunction with the popish emissary Rodolphi, to exasperate the Duke, whose weak mind, inflamed by the brilliant prospect opened to his view, arising from a marriage with a sovereign princess, feelings, which he mistook for an ardent passion, inspired by the charms of the captive Queen, was easily led by their pernicious councils. Ross had received intelli-

gence of the northern pirate, as he was termed, from some of his partisans in Scotland, and he gladly embraced the opportunity of engaging in their interest, one whose daring deeds and talent for intrigue, had made all Europe ring. True, the Bishop was aware, that the name of Crichton shrouded one far more powerful, but policy forbade him hinting such a secret, even to Rodolphi, who in all else that concerned Mary of Scotland, shared every thought.

“The pirate’s services are now needful to us,” he reflected, “but our plot successful, there may be urgent reasons why he should be cared for, and this may the more easily be accomplished if no one is in the secret save myself.”

It has been already seen, that Crichton was apprised of the scheme for setting the Queen of Scotland at liberty, by means of the smuggler Frank; and burning with the desire of vengeance, and to find himself once more

raised to his own rank in society, he eagerly listened to their overtures, and promised them essential aid. Impatient to obtain intelligence respecting this new and important ally, and which he had been for some days hourly expecting, the Bishop of Ross was slowly pacing up and down the gravel walk, bordered on each side by formal poplars, when he was informed that one without the gate, desired to speak with him. "'Tis Crichton's messenger," he muttered, "he must be met in such a guise, as befits a high dignitary of Rome, or he may perchance give his master such an account of us, as shall lead him to hold us lightly, and as not possessing power to conduct so important an affair." So saying, the Bishop hurried to his private apartment, into which, save on such occasions as the present, no stranger's eye was permitted to penetrate, for in outward appearance, the Holy father maintained the rigid austerity, which had so good

an effect in imposing on the credulity of the vulgar. Several of the vaulted apartments through which he passed bore ample testimony to the life of mortification, which was, or seemed to be led by the clergy in those days ; but these passed through, the young priest, who attended the Bishop, touched a spring, and a door concealed by a large picture flew open with noiseless celerity, and as the youthful aspirant to such a luxurious chamber devoutly crossed himself, and uttered a pious ejaculation, the worldly minded professor of a meek and holy religion entered the room.

At the expiration of a few minutes, a small bell was heard, and the priest, who had remained in the outward apartment, busily occupied in completing the exercise, which the arrival of the messenger had interrupted, again opened the door. The orders were given in a few words, and as promptly obeyed. A firm step echoed through the vaulted rooms, and

the next moment, Crichton found himself in the presence of the Bishop of Ross. A firm nerve might have trembled, as that keen grey eye was fixed with scrutinizing search on the messenger's countenance, but though the apprehension of death, so frequently the torment of the wicked, led Crichton to shrink from any personal encounter, at least in single combat, for after times shewed, that in the battle he was still brave, yet the nerves of the pirate had been too surely steeled, to allow any outward sign of perturbation to betray him.

Crichton was personally unknown to the Bishop ; all, therefore, that the reverend father saw before him, was a common man, dressed in course grey duffle, his face in some degree concealed by a cap, which seemed well adapted to travelling, as being calculated to defend the ears from the cold, coming down each side of the face, so as completely to conceal the whiskers, and meeting in a point under the chin ; the

hat which had been worn over this comfortable head gear, had of course been removed, as the pirate entered the room, and he now kneeled reverentially before the Bishop, craving his blessing.

“The blessing of the saints, and that of our holy father, rest upon thee my son. Rise and utter thy mission without fear. From whom dost thou come? Speak freely, we are alone.”

“From him men call the great northern pirate,” Crichton answered. “He greets you, holy father, by me, and prays you to read this letter, that you may see his mind therein.”

Thus saying, the pirate handed a packet to the Bishop, who, with the caution men are wont to use when they are engaged in any perilous undertaking, in which a look may say too much, turned from the stranger, and walking to the window, rapidly perused the letters.

Meanwhile Crichton, having nothing to hope from watching the prelate, while thus engaged,

cast his eyes round the room, and had not his long sojourn in early life at Rome, familiarised his mind with the splendour and luxury, adopted by the Holy See and its satellites, he might have marvelled at all he saw, in that gorgeous apartment. Rich carpets, an article of luxury then almost unknown in England, covered the floor; couches, on which the most fastidious sensualist might have sought to stretch his delicate limbs, Venice glasses of vast magnitude, pictures which would perhaps have better suited the walls of a gay and youthful monarch's palace, than those of an apartment, occupied by a man devoted to the service of religion, all these met and charmed the eye. Yet with this earthly splendour, were strangely mingled evidences of that superstition, so prominent a feature in the religion of Rome. On one exquisite little shrine might be seen a costly box, glittering with precious stones, and containing the filthy parings of some saintly toe, while ano-

ther equally splendid, was the depository of a few grey hairs, matted together, said to be collected from the weapon, which, by depriving Thomas a Becket of his brains, thereby rendered him a fit object for canonization, in the infallible church.

A critical observer might have detected something very like a sneer on the lip of Crichton, as he marked the strange incongruities of the apartment, and it became more marked, when his eye rested on the effeminate dress of the Bishop, whose flowing robes glittered with gold, jewels and embroidery, but as the Holy Father, having finished the letters, turned to address him, the expression was gone, and all that could be read in his face, was the dark and sullen expression of the hardened ruffian.

“ This letter tells me, my son,” the Bishop said, “ that I may safely trust the bearer, seeing you heartily desire with the writer to put down the false religion, which has so unhappily crept

into this land ; and it moreover assures me, you will not shrink to shew your zeal in behalf of our Holy Mother Church, and our lawful queen Mary Stuart, even to the death, should it be required. Much need have we of such a faithful servant, at a time when heresy dares so openly shew itself, and when the throne of this country is filled by a bastard and usurper, who dares to maintain her unlawful possessions in open defiance of the anathemas, so justly denounced against her by the Holy Pontiff, thereby depriving one of her rightful inheritance, on whom the blessing of the faithful rests. The time is ripe for the servants of our true church to make a vigorous effort, for the recovery of her rights, and our trusty and well beloved son here promises us such aid as cannot fail materially to forward this our righteous cause ; thus with God's blessing, we will no longer keep back our hand from the work, whereunto he has appointed us. This letter speaks of

a thousand men ready to take arms in behalf of the Queen of Scotland ; can you give a shrewd guess how long your master will require to muster them ?”

“ I would only ask the time,” Crichton answered eagerly, “ that it should take to travel from this to Scotland.”

The Bishop started ; then said suspiciously. “ Does your master then delegate his authority to a retainer ?”

Crichton saw his error, and hastened to recover it as best he might.

“ My master and I,” he said carelessly, “ are foster brothers, one breast fed us, and I have never left his side, since the day we were born ; he would do nothing without my aid, else I had not been entrusted in this matter ; but if it like you better, Holy Father, give me a line by your own hand to my master, and doubt not our men shall be ready at the moment you need them.”

“ Enough said, my son ; benedicite ! you are at this time worth a monarch’s ransom ; for while I am shut up in this place, I sorely need some trusty messenger, such as you will prove, by whose means, I can hold communion with one, who is ever actively labouring in the holy cause ; but the eyes of Elizabeth Tudor are on us both ; St. George, to whom I have lately more especially addressed my prayers in behalf of this ill fated land, has surely sent you hither at the hour of need. But you have travelled far, my son, and I doubt not want refreshment.”

He touched the little silver bell, and the priest, who had ushered Crichton to the chamber, reappeared ; at a sign from the Bishop he vanished, but presently returned, followed by one of inferior rank, who brought and placed on a table, bread, meat, and wine. When all was arranged, the Bishop approached the table, and having said a long grace over the viands.

“ Draw near, my son,” he said, “ spare not

the food, nor the wine flask, for thou must forth again towards London this night; and will have need of strength to bear thee on thy journey. And while you eat I will prepare a scroll for our trusty and well beloved brother Rodolphi, who will afterwards determine your future path."

Crichton availed himself of the proffered refreshment, marvelling, during his repast, who this new ally might be, the Bishop's name only being familiar to him, as connected with this enterprise, and he half dreaded that some unforeseen accident might betray him, should he be compelled to remain in London above a few hours. "But the die is cast," he thought, "and I have that in hand which will make or mar me."

CHAPTER XIII.

WE, once more, return to the hero of our tale, Harry Knox, having left him in no very enviable situation, passed from one dispenser of the law, to a higher tribunal. The mysterious language in which the worthy magistrate had couched his account of the prisoner, caused a considerable degree of curiosity concerning him, more especially as a hint, the cautious magistrate contrived to glide into the

account 'accidently on purpose,' as Pat might have it, inclined the higher authorities to whom he was handed over to conclude that the culprit was a popish spy, a species of monster, for which the English in those days, had the same taste they possess at present for the wonders to be found in the Zoological Gardens, whether in the form of Chimpanzée or Giraffe.

A vast crowd followed Harry Knox from the prison to the awful tribunal, at which he was again to be arraigned ; with the noisy spirit of a true English mob, they denounced vengeance against him. As the examination of the prisoner was a private one, their malice did not follow him beyond the door ; perhaps had he been exposed a few minutes longer to its violence, a total revulsion of feeling might have been the result, since many of the softer sex, whose presence in every riot and tumult shew how good a claim they have to their title, were loud in their praises of the handsome

young sailor, and abuse of those by whom he was reviled.

The sudden transition from the din without, to the profound stillness that reigned in the council chamber, caused the youth's heart to palpitate with a violence which had not agitated it, even in the midst of the crowd he had just passed through. At the upper end of the room, was a small table, at which were seated two persons, one of whom instantly arrested the prisoner's attention. He was a man past the prime of life, of a mild and majestic demeanour, some latent sparks of fire still lurked in his eye, but they were chastened and subdued by years of toil, in the service of a queen, who, though she knew and fully appreciated all the high qualities and rare endowments of her trusty minister, was nevertheless one, whose exaction of service, kept pace with the power of rendering it; and they who sought to pluck the rose of the royal Elizabeth's grace, must

take no heed of the accompanying thorns. An ample beard of hoary whiteness, fell over the ruff that encircled his throat; a cloak of black cloth, clasped at the collar by a jewelled brooch, fell in folds around him, the order of St George was displayed over it, while his black velvet cap was adorned with another costly jewel.

The time since Harry Knox had quitted the precincts of the English court had not sufficed to erase from his memory, one of the most conspicuous personages in it, though the character which Lord Burleigh had obtained for severity, did not render the recognition of the minister in the person of his judge, by any means consolatory. Yet, there was nothing in the statesman's face to intimidate, on the contrary, much might be traced there calculated to inspire confidence. Harry Knox, with many others, judged of Burleigh through the jaundiced medium of prejudice; the disturbance given

to Elizabeth's government by the adherents of the Pope, rendered vigorous measures on the part of the English ministers perfectly necessary; hence arose the odium cast on the Lord Keeper, who was ever on the alert at the least shadow of danger, which seemed to threaten the safety of his sovereign. A bold attempt made by the Pope at this time, to weaken the attachment of the English to their Queen, had roused the indignation of Burleigh, and there might perchance, be a deeper shade of severity than usual, mingling with the feelings with which he regarded his youthful prisoner.

Burleigh was perusing a paper with deep attention, and as Harry Knox was placed before him, the minister suspended his occupation from time to time, for the purpose of scanning the youth's features. When he had finished reading the scroll, Burleigh threw it on the table with a dissatisfied look, muttering to himself "could not the fool be more expli-

cit!" Then taking up another paper which lay on the table, containing the deposition of the watchman.

"Come forward," he said, "young man, you stand charged with murder, they tell me."

"A charge, which if your lordship will give yourself the trouble to read the evidence through, you will find totally without foundation."

"Why were you not then dismissed?"

"Because, my lord, I objected to answer certain questions, which I considered the gentleman, by whom I was interrogated, had no right to put."

Burleigh bent his brow.

"That is to say, sir, you refuse to give any satisfactory account of yourself, thereby leading us to conclude, you have some motive for concealment."

"Pardon me, my lord, every question relative to myself has been fully answered, it was

only when the questions touched on the affairs of another, that I hesitated to reply to them."

"I should be glad to hear your account of yourself, once more," Lord Burleigh said, and while the young sailor recapitulated the reason of his being found in a strange house at a late hour, the minister scanned with a cautious eye, the account he found already given. Fortunately for the prisoner the statements were found to agree, and as he laid down the document, Burleigh's look lost much of the sternness it had previously assumed."

"Your story he said bears the appearance of truth, and on two points alone, I am yet to be satisfied, the motive of your journey to England, and the friend you say you were seeking at the time of your apprehension; clear up these two points, and I see nothing to warrant your further detention."

"And it is precisely on these two points, my lord," Harry Knox replied respectfully yet

firmly, "that I do not feel at liberty to speak ; I cannot give a more satisfactory reason for coming to England than that already given, I can only repeat that I accompanied a friend, who came on some affairs of his own. For my particular motives in taking the voyage, they may soon be traced to a love of change, which I believe is natural to all men and above all to sailors, for we love not a settled life, my lord, and when I heard that one, who is to me as a brother, was about to set sail for England, I gladly made that an excuse to change my quarters."

Lord Burleigh shook his head.

"Your dress," he said, "might lead me to suppose you indeed a sailor, but your language and bearing belong to a higher rank ; you cannot deceive me, young man. Herbert," he continued addressing the person, who was sitting at the table, busily engaged in writing, "Herbert give me the papers sent this morning."

The gentleman thus addressed unlocked a curious casket, which stood beside him, and having selected two papers from among a number, presented them to Lord Burleigh, who thus continued. "A daring affront has been offered our royal mistress, by some secret emissary of the Court of Rome. I am led to believe, that the strange and mysterious circumstances, which have caused your apprehension, will afford a clue that may enable me to detect the agents in this base attempt to deprive our sovereign of her subjects' allegiance. Tell me then young man, do you know the contents of this paper?"

As he spoke, Burleigh unrolled the scroll he held and suddenly placed it before the prisoner's eyes, in a way well calculated to throw him off his guard. Harry Knox glanced his eye over it and read the words, "*Papæ pii quintus sententia declaratoria,*" which headed the bull of excommunication issued by the Pope against

the English Queen, and which during the preceding night had been daringly affixed to the gate of the Bishop of London's palace. But the young sailor was incapable of deciphering the scroll, or he would have been amused at least, if not edified by the character therein drawn of the monster of impiety and wickedness Queen Elizabeth, whom his Holiness solemnly consigned to the devil.

Burleigh's eye was keen to note the slightest change of color or countenance indicative of any previous knowledge the prisoner might possess of the offensive document ; but no such sign appeared, as with perfect frankness of demeanour the young sailor said, " my learning will not enable me to understand this writing ; the life of a sailor has little leisure for study."

" Nay, then I will construe it for you," Burleigh answered, " that I may judge how far the sentiments it contains find an echo in your bosom."

He then proceeded to give an English version of the bull, ever and anon, as some strong expression, setting forth the heinous wickedness of the heretic Queen was found therein, turning his eye on the youth, to mark how he was affected by them ; but the listener's countenance expressed curiosity alone, and he appeared alike regardless of him by whom the words were dictated, and of the Queen against whom they were directed. Burleigh observed with surprise, that at those expressions where a pious Catholic would have signed the cross, or given some such token of reverence, the prisoner made no effort to comply with the customary form.

The hint given by the Justice, left Lord Burleigh no room to doubt that the youth was one of those that bowed the knee to Baal, and he was therefore led to conclude, that motives of policy induced the culprit scrupulously to avoid all external demonstrations of his religion

an opinion which did not tend to remove his suspicions.

“ He is a consummate hypocrite for his age,” the statesman concluded. “ I will give him one chance more, and if I fail to extract the truth from the lad, the rack must do its duty.”

“ You persist in entire ignorance of this vile paper,” he said aloud, “ will you as positively deny, that your friend’s business in this country was to earn the death, which awaits him, by daring to affix it to the gate, where it was found ?”

For a moment Harry Knox was at fault, for he was at a loss to determine how far Crichton might indeed be implicated in this affair. The exact nature of the business which had brought the pirate to London, was never fully revealed to him. Of one thing alone, Harry Knox felt assured, that Crichton’s views were hostile to Queen Elizabeth, while it was equally certain that he favoured the pretensions of her

rival. He recollected too, that the pirate had been uneasy respecting a packet, which had been consigned to Parson, and might not that packet have contained this paper?

The wily statesman saw the doubt that embarrassed his prisoner, and hastened to take advantage of it. Assuming the mild persuasive look that so well suited him.

“Think well before you speak,” he said, “youth and inexperience plead strongly in your behalf, and doubt not all Cecil’s interest shall be exerted to procure your pardon from our gracious Queen; nay, she herself promises not only pardon, but princely rewards to any who shall throw a light on the subject; hear her own gracious words to this effect.”

He read some extracts from the letter, which Elizabeth had that morning written to him with her own hand, and which, as he stated, promised wealth and honors to those, who should give any information of the agents by

whose means, the Bishop of Rome had thus insulted her in the heart of her dominions. But the crafty statesman suppressed those intemperate expressions of revenge, which had flowed from the same royal pen, lest their import should lead the prisoner, through dread of the punishment that awaited his friend, to suppress any of the facts in his possession.

“Such are the inducements,” Burleigh continued, deliberately folding up the letter, “my royal mistress holds out to him who will atone for, perhaps a momentary error, by a candid confession.”

“The rewards your Queen holds out for treachery,” Harry Knox answered with a smile, “are doubtless tempting; but fortunately for my scanty stock of firmness, my lord, I have not the means of earning them, even if I had the inclination, and I positively assure your lordship that I possess no secret, either relating to myself or my friend, which can purchase for

me Her Highness' favor, or my own abhorrence."

"Why then refuse to give up that friend's name?" Burleigh persisted, unwilling to lose the ground he flattered himself a moment before he had gained, "since there is nothing to conceal, why so much mystery regarding him?"

"Simply because my lord, I know not how far he might approve of my meddling with his name or affairs, in his absence."

"'Tis well, young sir," Burleigh said, in some degree, losing his patience, "you have trifled with my clemency long enough, the Lieutenant of the Tower must speak with you anon, when you shall have tasted of his discipline, we shall find you more tractable."

"Threats can draw nothing more from me, my lord," Harry Knox answered haughtily."

"But the rack shall; you must tell a different tale to-morrow."

As Burleigh spoke thus the door of the cham-

ber opened, and a tall elderly man, dressed in the naval uniform, entered hastily.

“It is the Queen’s pleasure,” he said, addressing Burleigh, “that you dismiss the prisoner, my lord, since he is innocent of the charge brought against him; the real offender has surrendered himself, and is now awaiting his punishment; your presence is requested in the council chamber.”

“I come, Sir John,” Burleigh replied, “but I cannot comply with your directions respecting this prisoner; he must to the Tower, there to undergo a strict examination, I can make nothing of him.”

“Not on this charge, my Lord Keeper, since the man who owns a deed he glories in, has solemnly protested no one but himself is implicated.”

“Yet I have strong reason to believe, this young man was his friend and companion, nor can I dismiss him until I find he chooses to

give a more satisfactory account of himself, or some one in this country gives it for him."

"Sir John Norris can do me that piece of service," the prisoner said coming forward, "he can bear witness that I have fought at his side against the enemies of Queen Elizabeth."

"And that he owes his life to your bravery, my lad, you might have added," Norris said, extending his hand to the young sailor, "where have you been playing at hide and seek this long time, Harry? and how fares my honest messmate, Ben Franklin?" The history of poor Ben's death might at this moment, have turned the current of his nephew's affairs back into the same awkward channel from which it had so happily diverged. He therefore merely answered that he had only just returned to England and had been prevented seeing any of his friends, by being closely confined on a false charge from which he was no sooner released

than he found himself saddled with another equally untrue.

Sir John Norris laughed.

“ Only the fate of war,” he said “ we sons of Neptune should be too well accustomed to the storms, he thinks fit to raise against us sometimes, to heed those dame fortune blows in our tack. But come, Harry, I must stand your friend with my Lord Keeper here, who seldom bestows so much of his time even on royalty itself, as he has expended on you. My lord, if this foolish boy has, in a fit of obstinacy, chosen to withhold any thing relative to his uncle, honest Ben Franklin, I pledge myself for the fidelity of the brave old tar ; nay, yourself, my lord, will remember his zeal in our service, though ancient prejudices that still cling to the old, have settled round his heart, inclining him to the faith of his forefathers ; but for my young friend here, I always

thought he bore the title which is now our boast, that of a staunch Protestant."

"Enough, Sir John; had the boy given me the name of Sir John Norris, or that of the old veteran you speak of, it would have been a sufficient warrant of his own loyalty, but obstinacy must ever meet its due punishment. Yet look well to the youth, Sir John, for credit an old man's word, he is not what he appears."

"True, my lord," Norris answered laughing, "since to you he seems an obstinate, wrong headed young callant, while I know him to be a brave, generous, intelligent youth, and one who will yet make a figure in the world."

"Either good or bad ! Farewell Sir John."

So saying, the Lord Keeper took his way to the council chamber, where several members were sitting in judgment on Felton, who, as the reader may remember, was the person that affixed the Pope's bull to the bishop's palace, and who, far from seeking to escape the pun-

ishment due to his audacity, courted his fate, and being condemned on his own confession suffered death with a firmness worthy of a better cause.

From Harry Knox Sir John Norris soon learned the fate of his old favorite; and, although he understood and applauded the caution that prompted his nephew to conceal it while in the presence of Burleigh, still there arose in his mind a misgiving, which Norris would willingly have shaken off; but this feeling was much increased by the evident confusion the young sailor displayed when questioned touching his mode of life since his uncle's death. Something was wrong; and Norris, while he felt disposed to extend his patronage to the youth before him, formed the determination to watch him narrowly.

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